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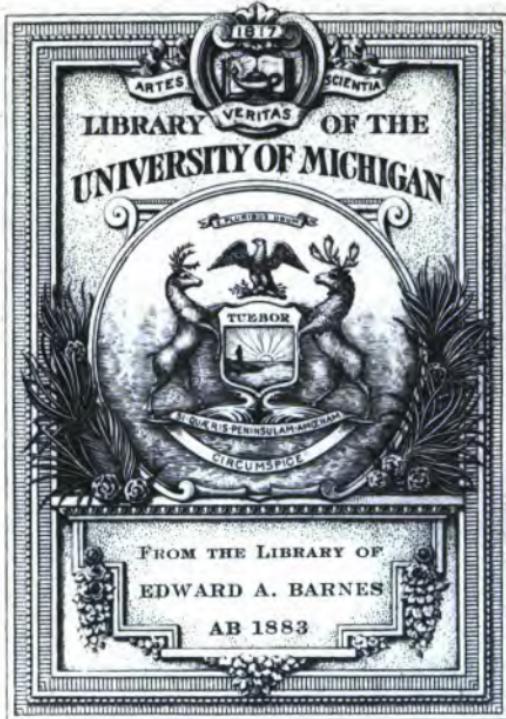
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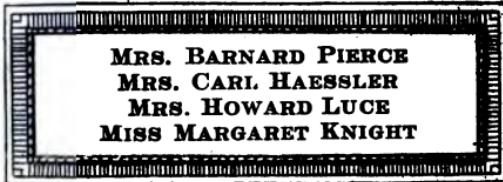
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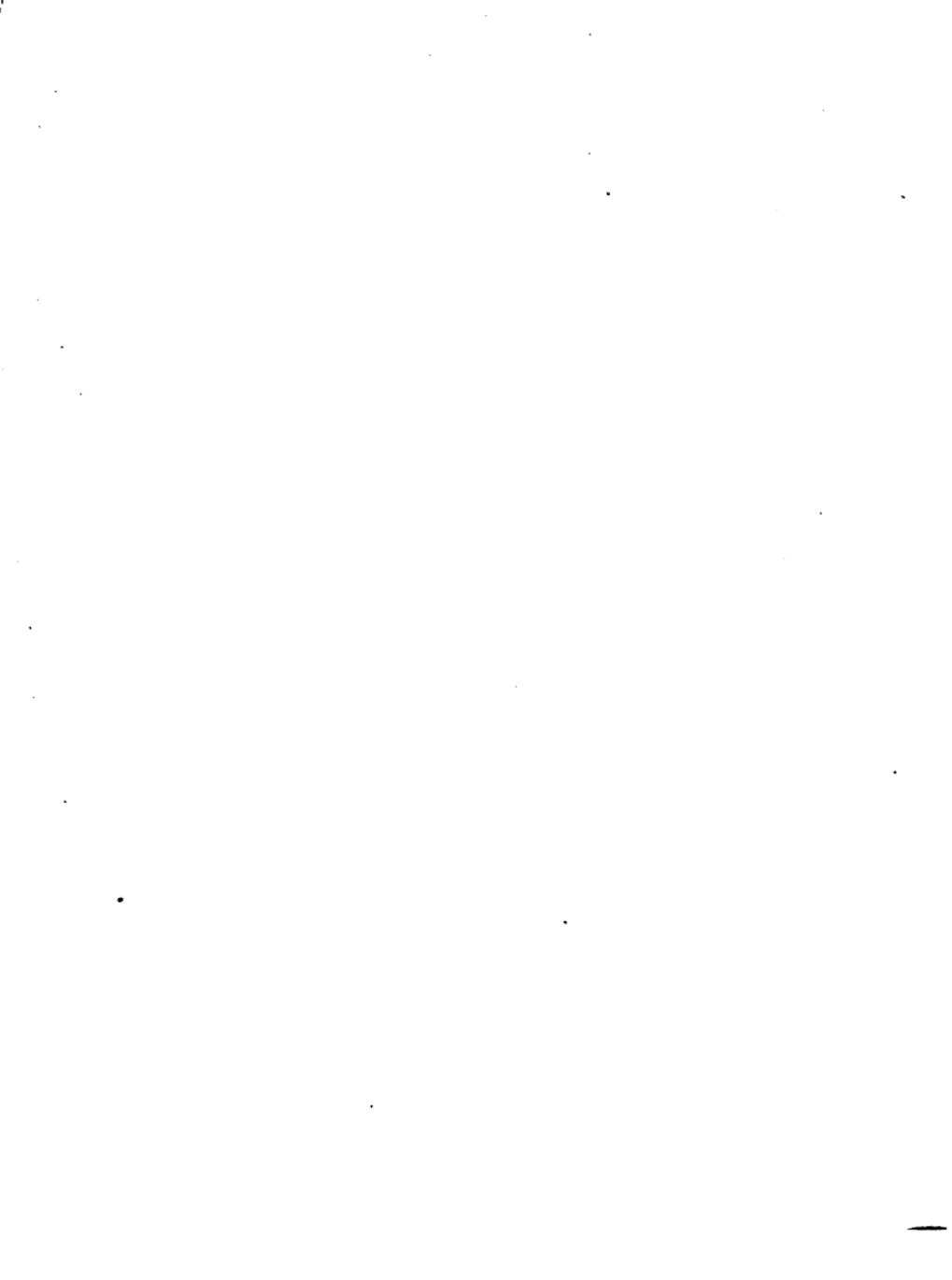


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# BRITISH LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF  
CHARACTER AND SOCIAL LIFE

EDITED BY

EDWARD T. MASON

EDITOR OF "HUMOROUS MASTERPIECES," ETC.



NEW YORK & LONDON

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## MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND BEHAVIOR

---

SIR JAMES FORBES TO LADY RACHEL RUSSELL.

1693.

I could not miss this opportunity of giving your Ladyship some account of Lord Ross and Lady Ross's journey, and their reception at Belvoir, which looked more like the progress of a king and queen through their country than that of a bride and bridegroom's going home to their father's house. . . .

I cannot better represent their first arrival at Belvoir than by the Woburn song that Lord Bedford liked so well: for at the gate were four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row; four-and-twenty trumpeters, with their tan-tara-ra-tas; four-and-twenty ladies and as many parsons; and in great order they went in procession to the great apartment, where the usual ceremony of saluting and wishing of joy passed, but still not without something represented in the song as very much tittle-tattle and fiddle-fiddle. After this the time passed till supper in visiting all the apartments of the house, and in seeing

the preparations for the sack-posset, which was the most extraordinary thing I did ever see, and much greater than it was represented to be. After supper, which was exceedingly magnificent, the whole company went in procession to the great hall, the bride and bridegroom first, and all the rest in order, two and two. There it was the scene opened, and the great cistern appeared, and the healths began: first in spoons, some time after in silver cups, and though the healths were many and a great variety of names given to them, it was observed, after an hour's hot service, the posset did not sink above one inch, which made my Lady Rutland call in all the family, and then upon their knees the bride and bridegroom's health, with prosperity and happiness, was drunk in tankards brim-full of sack-posset. This lasted till past 12 o'clock.

---

MRS. MARY DELANY TO MISS DEWES.

DELVILLE, October 6, 1764.

According to my promise, I shall give my dearest niece an account of our wedding, which I am sure will be a satisfaction to all our kind friends now assembled at Calwich. . . . All met here at eleven; the sun shone bright, and

we proceeded in order through the garden to church. When we returned, breakfast was prepared in the drawing-room, every countenance cheerful. . . .

When breakfast was over the company dispersed for a little while, some to different rooms, some to the garden, and, breakfast things removed, all met again and music took place. I tried and recollect ed some of my old tunes to set the rest a-going, then the Mr. Hamiltons brought fiddle and flute and played some very pretty sonatas together.

Mrs. G. Hamilton plays very agreeably on the harpsichord, but particularly excels in country dances and minuets, which she plays so distinctly and in such firm good time that it supplied the place of an excellent fiddler. Dinner at four. Here 's my bill of fare :

Turbot and soles, remove ham.

Force meat, etc. Two partridges, two grouse.

Rabbits and onions. Sweetbreads and crumbs. Salmigundi.

Pies.

Soup.

Boiled chicken. Collop veal and olives. Pease.

Cream pudding. Plumb crocant.

Chine of mutton. Turkey in jelly. Hare. Lobster fricassee.

Dessert.—Nine things, six of them fruit out of own garden, and a plate of fine Alpine strawberries.

These particulars may be impertinent, but it is doing as I would be done by, and between real friends no circumstance is ever trivial.

Coffee and tea at seven ; one cribbage table in a corner of the room, which is pretty large, and three couple of dancers to Mrs. Hamilton's playing. At half an hour after nine the prayer bell rang and we went to chapel ; after that a salver with bridal cake ready in the parlor, the coaches at the door, and the company went away at ten. We had a quiet supper by ourselves, a party quarée yesterday, and to-day so much company that I have hardly time to add everybody's compliments, and to say Adieu.

---

JOHN LOCKE TO JOHN STRACHEY.

CLEVE, December 9, 1665.

I was invited and dined at a monastery with the Franciscan friars, who had before brought a Latin epistle to us for relief ; for they live on others' charity, or, more truly, live idly on others' labors. But to my dinner ; for my mouth waters to be at it, and no doubt you will long for such another entertainment when you know this. After something instead of grace or music—choose you whether, for I could make neither of it ; for, though what was

sung was Latin, yet the tune was such that I neither understood the Latin nor the harmony; the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, to the first petition, they repeated aloud, but went on silently to "Sed libera nos," etc., and then broke out into a loud chorus, which continued to the end; during their silence they stooped forwards, and held their heads as if they had been listening to one another's whispers. After this preludium, down we sat, the chief of the monks (I suppose the prior) in the inside of the table, just in the middle, and all the brethren on each side of him. I was placed just opposite to him, as if I had designed to bid battle to them all. But we were all very quiet; and, after some silence, in marched a solemn procession of peas-porridge, every one his dish. I could not tell by the looks what it was, till, putting my spoon in for discovery, some peas in the bottom peeped out. I had pity on them, and was willing enough to spare them, but was forced by good manners, though against my nature and appetite, to destroy some of them, and so on I fell. All this while not a word. I could not tell whether to impute the silence to the eagerness of their stomachs, which allowed

their mouths no other employment but to fill them, or any other reason. I was confident it was not in admiration of their late music. At last the oracle of the place spoke, and told them he gave them leave to speak to entertain me. I returned my compliment, and then to discourse we went, helter-skelter, as hard as our bad Latin and worse pronunciation, on each side, would let us; but no matter—we cared not for Priscian, whose head suffered that day not a little. However, this saved me from the peas-pottage and the peas-pottage from me, for now I had something else to do. Our next course was, every one his act of fish, and butter to boot; but whether it was intended for fresh or salt fish I cannot tell, and I believe it is a question as hard as any Thomas ever disputed. Our third service was cheese and butter, and the cheese had this peculiar in it, which I never saw anywhere else, that it had caraway seeds in it. The prior had upon the table by him a little bell, which he rang when he wanted any thing, or took it away, but they bowed with much reverence and kissed the table. The prior was a good plump fellow, that had more belly than brains, and methought was very fit to be rever-

enced, and not much unlike some head of a college. I liked him well for an entertainment, for if we had had a good dinner, he would not have disturbed me much with his discourse. The first that kissed the table did it so leisurely that I thought he had held his head there that the prior, during our silence, might have wrote something on his bald crown, and made it sink that way into his understanding. Their beer was pretty good, but their countenances bespoke better; their bread brown, and their table-linen neat enough. After dinner we had the second part of the same tune, and after that I departed. The truth is, they were civil and courteous, and seemed good-natured. It was their time of fast in order to Christmas. If I have another feast there, you shall be my guest. You will, perhaps, have reason to think that, whatever becomes of the rest, I shall bring home my belly well improved, since all I tell you is of eating and drinking. But you must know that knight-errants do not choose their adventures, and those who sometimes live pleasantly in brave castles, amidst feasting and ladies, are at other times in battles and wildernesses, and you must take them as they come.

---

MRS. PENDARVES (*afterwards Mrs. Delany*) TO MRS. ANN GRANDVILLE.

SOMERSET HOUSE, October 31, 1727.

After a Coronation\* a Lord Mayor's feast cannot presume to make a figure in print, but as I love to keep my word on all occasions I will, according to my promise, describe as well as I am able what I was yesterday witness of, though with gazing my eyes are so weak to-day that I fear I shall hardly be able to see my way quite through the crowd. The Duchess of Manchester, Lady Carteret, Lady Fanny Shirley, called on me half an hour after one; the streets were prodigiously crowded with mob and the train-bands, whose ridiculous appearance and odd countenances were very entertaining, and all the windows from the bottom to the top loaded with people. We were in no bustle of coaches, for no hackneys were allowed to pass, and all went the same way; but there was so great a throng they could move but very slowly for fear of trampling the people to death, so that we were a whole hour going from Somerset House to Guildhall. When we came to King Street the officers upon duty said we must not go any farther, but get out of

\* That of George II.

our coaches in Cheapside, for none but the royal family were to drive to the Hall gate, but as the street was well swept and soldiers planted to keep off the mob, it was very good walking. When we had walked about half-way up the street, one of the Lord Mayor's officers with a blue and gold staff met us, and said, with an audible and formal voice, "Ladies, open your tickets," which accordingly we did. "Very well, ladies, you will have admittance into the Hall, and, *ladies, you may tarry till the morning; indeed, from this time until six o' the clock you may tarry.*" Then we were all conducted into the room where my Lady Mayoress and all the Aldermen's ladies were seated. Our names were told, and everybody made a low curtsey to her Ladyship, who returned it with a great deal of civility, and told us if we would follow her we should dine at her table—an honor not to be refused, and, indeed, it was a particular favor. We attended her and had a very fine dinner, and all the polite men of our acquaintance waited behind our chairs and helped us to what we wanted; I had to my share Sir Robert Sutton and Mr. Stanley.

As soon as we had dined the Lady Mayoress

got up, and we followed her into a very pretty room with a good fire. . . . After that we went back to the first room, at the upper end of which was placed two armed chairs and two stools for their Majesties and the Princesses. All this while my Lord Mayor was performing his part through the City, but *wind and tide* being against him made his return very late.

The King, etc., were at a house which they say has always been kept for that purpose, over against Bow Church, to see the procession. His own coach and horses, that conveyed him to the Hall, was covered with purple cloth; the eight horses (the beautifullest creatures of their kind), were cream color, the trappings purple silk, and their manes and tails tied with purple riband; the Princesses' horses were black, dressed with white ribands. The King was in purple velvet; the Queen and Princesses in black, and very fine with jewels. At six o' th' clock my Lord Mayor and Aldermen returned, and in three quarters of an hour after the King came. My Lord Mayor, after having received him and paid the usual homage at the gate, conducted him, etc., into the room where we sate. He and the Queen and the Princesses

stood before the chairs and stools that were placed for them, which were raised four steps, and a very loyal speech was made by one of the Aldermen and an acknowledgment of the honor received. Their Majesties were very gracious, and then the Lord Mayoress and the Aldermen's wives were presented. All that ceremony being over, it was time they should have some refreshments, which they had in a very magnificent manner in the Hall.

We followed the train and saw them at dinner. The Lady Mayoress waited at the Queen's elbow. Having satisfied our curiosity so far, we thought it convenient to secure a place in the gallery where the ball was to be, which indeed was much too strait for the purpose, but we consoled ourselves with tea and coffee. About ten the royal folk came where we were, but the crowd was so insupportable we made the best of our way out of it. I had one glimpse of *our Alderman*, who was endeavoring to get to me, but that was not to be effected, so we were parted and saw no more of him. The King and Queen went about twelve o'clock away, and we stayed an hour and a quarter after them, not being able sooner to get to our coach.

## THOMAS CHALMERS TO HIS DAUGHTER.

LONDON, October 29, 1830.

. . . Our coaches came for us to take us to the Mansion House, where we were to dine with the Lord Mayor. This is a magnificent house, and has a very noble dining-room. The Lord Mayor himself was unwell, and could not be with us. His chaplain did the honors for him. There were about fifty. We assembled in the drawing-room. There were about six ladies; and I was very graciously received by the Lady Mayoress and the Lady Mayoress Elect, the latter of whom I had the honor of leading to the great dining-hall. The Lady Mayoress Elect will be Lady Mayoress at the great civic feast to their Majesties, so that I had the honor of leading the very lady to dinner whom the King will lead to the great Guildhall dinner in about a fortnight. It was truly a civic feast. . . . There are some venerable customs handed down from very remote antiquity, which I took great delight in witnessing and sharing in. After dinner one of the portly and magnificent waiters stood behind the Lady Mayoress with a large flagon, having a lid that lifted, and filled with the best spiced wine. He then called out "silence," and delivered the following speech

from behind the Lady Mayoress, with the great flagon in his hand : " Commissioners of the Church of Scotland, the Lord Mayor, the Lady Mayoress, the Lord Mayor Elect, the Lady Mayoress Elect, my masters the Sheriff and Aldermen of the good city of London, bid you hearty welcome to this our ancient town, and offer you a cup of love-and-kindness in token of good feeling and good fellowship." I have not done justice to the speech, for those Aldermen present were named in it, among the rest the famous Alderman Whitman and Sir Claudius Hunter. After this speech by the crier, the cup was given to the Lady Mayoress, who turned round with it to her neighbor the Lord Mayor Elect ; he lifted the lid and kept it in his hand till she drank, both standing ; she then gave it to him, but not till she wiped with a towel the place she had drunk at ; he put on the lid, and turned round to me. I turned round to my next neighbor, the Lady Mayoress Elect ; she rose and took off the lid, I drank, wiped, and gave the cup to her, who put on the lid, turned to her next neighbor, etc., etc. And so the cup, or great flagon rather, went round the whole company. Another peculiar observance

was, that instead of hand-glasses for washing, there was put down an immense massive plate of gilt silver, with a little rose water poured into it, and placed before the Lady Mayoress; she dipped the corner of her towel into it, and therewith sponged her face and hands, and said plate went round the table, and each of us did the same. It was most refreshing. Then came toasts and speeches. The Moderator gave one in reply to the Church of Scotland; and the Lady Mayoress declared she would not leave the room till I spoke, so there was a particular toast for me, and I had to make a speech, which I concluded with a toast to the Lady Mayoress. Mr. George Sinclair was asked by her Ladyship to return thanks in her name, which he did with a speech, etc. After the ladies retired, I sat between the Lord Mayor, who took the chair, and Alderman Sir Claudius Hunter, who was particularly kind to me. We drank tea with the ladies. . . . We went off in our carriages about ten, much delighted with the day's work, and retired to bed soon after our arrival.\* . . .

\* It would be very pleasant to print, in this connection, Thackeray's "A Dinner in the City" ("Sketches and Travels in London"), and Hawthorne's "Civic Banquets" ("Our Old Home"), but, unhappily, foot-notes have their limits.

---

MISS ELIZABETH CARTER TO MISS CATHERINE  
TALBOT.

CANTERBURY, January 20, 1748.

. . . This place is at present a perfect scene of gayety. There is a set of officers from Flanders, extremely well-bred, agreeable men, who are very fond of music and dancing, and this gives great life to all our public diversions. On twelfth night we had an assembly of about ninety people, and there was fine crowding to make one's way through them, as the room is much too small for such a place as this. The first part of the evening, as it was properly a card assembly, everybody played cards, but in the midst of this profundity of whist, folks who love music were agreeably surprised by the sudden striking up of several instruments, which were introduced to entertain the company by the officers. This was a matter of great offence, and violently shocked some of the elder ladies, who thought it was monstrous to be so interrupted in their game, and that such a horrid noise was a downright infringement of the rights of the assembly, so the musicians were ordered to depart in the midst of their tune. Adieu! I am going to drink a quart of

milk and tea with Don Quixote, and then I shall be at your service again.

And so, as I was saying, as soon as these anti-harmonists would consent to part with their card-tables we had a dance. It was my sorrowful hap to meet with a most dreary man by way of partner. He was introduced to me as a person of most extraordinary sense, a character I shall always dread in future in this capacity, for with all the art and industry I could possibly make use of, I could extort nothing from him but a monosyllable, and dancing with him was as tiresome an exercise as ringing a dumb-bell. As I am always more disposed to talk at an assembly than in any other place, this was a sad cramp to my genius, and if I had not sometimes made my escape from him I think I should have been in a fair way of falling fast asleep, and consequently growing as wise as he. To leave nothing untried I at last delivered him over to one of the most lively, entertaining people in the world, but even she had as little success as I had ; the man stared, and seemed astonished to hear her talk, but seemed not to have the smallest inclination to follow her example. . . .

---

MRS. MARY DELANY TO MRS. PORT.

June, 1774.

I suppose you will be informed by the newspapers of all that passed at the Fête Champêtre last Thursday, the 9th of June, 1774, but as the authenticity of newspapers may sometimes be questioned, perhaps it may be more satisfactory to you to receive this, which came from one of the company, and when you have read it, if you think it will be any amusement to my brother you may send it to Calwich. I think it a fairy scene that may equal any in Madame Danois; nothing at least in modern days has been exhibited so perfectly magnificent—everybody in good humor, and agreed that it exceeded their expectation. The master of the entertainment (Lord Stanley) was dressed like Rubens, and Lady Betty Hamilton (for whom the feast was made) like Rubens's wife. The company were received on the lawn before the house, which is scattered with trees and opens to the downs. The company arriving, and parties of people of all ranks that came to admire, made the scene quite enchanting, which was greatly enlivened with a most beautiful setting sun breaking from a black cloud in its

greatest glory. After half an hour's sauntering the company were called to the other side, to a more confined spot, where benches were placed in a semicircle, and a fortunate clump of trees in the centre of the small lawn hid a band of music. A stage was (supposed to be) formed by a part being divided from the other part of the garden, with sticks entwined with natural flowers in wreaths and festoons joining each. A little dialogue between a Shepherd and Shepherdess, with a welcome to the company, was sung and said, and dancing by sixteen men and sixteen women *figurantis* from the Opera lasted about half an hour, after which this party was employed in *swinging, jumping*, shooting with bows and arrows, and various country sports. The gentlemen and ladies danced on the green till it was dark, and then preceded the music to the other side of the garden, the company following, where a magnificent saloon had been built, illuminated and decorated with the utmost elegance and proportion. Here they danced till supper, when curtains were drawn up, which showed the supper in a most convenient and elegant apartment which was built quite round the saloon. After the supper (which

was exceedingly good and everybody glad of it, as the evening had begun so very early, all the company being assembled in the saloon) an interlude, in which a Druid entered as an inhabitant of the *Oaks*,\* welcomed Lady Betty Hamilton, and described the happiness of Lord Stanley in having been so fortunate, and in a prophetic strain foretold the happiness that must follow so happy an union, which, with choruses and singing and dancing by the Dryads, Cupid and Hymen attending and dancing also, it concluded with the happiness of *the Oak* making so considerable a part in the arms of Hamilton. A piece of transparent painting was brought in, with a crest of Hamilton and Stanley surrounded with all the emblems of Cupid and Hymen, who crowned it with wreaths of flowers. From the great room in the house a large portico was built, which was supported by transparent columns and a transparent architecture on which was written, "To Propitious Venus." The pediment illuminated, and obelisks between the house and saloon. People in general very elegantly

\* The *fête* was at Lord Stanley's home, The Oaks, near Epsom.

dressed: the very young as peasants; the next as Polonise; the matrons dominos; the men principally dominos and many gardeners, as in the Opera dances.

---

HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

ARLINGTON STREET, February 27, 1770.

It is very lucky, seeing how much of the tiger enters into the human composition, that there should be a good dose of the monkey too. If Æsop had not lived so many centuries before the introduction of masquerades and operas, he would certainly have anticipated my observation, and worked it up into a capital fable. As we still trade upon the stock of the ancients, we seldom deal in any other manufacture; and though nature, after new combinations, lets forth new characteristics, it is very rarely they are added to the old fund; else how could so striking a remark have escaped being made, as mine, on the joint ingredients of tiger and monkey? In France the latter predominates, in England the former; but, like Orozmades and Arimanus, they get the better by turns. The bankruptcy in France and the rigors of the new Controller-General are half

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forgotten, in the expectation of a new opera at the theatre. Our civil war has been lulled asleep by a subscription masquerade, for which the House of Commons literally adjourned yesterday. Instead of Fairfaxes and Cromwells we have had a crowd of Henry the Eights, Wolseys, Vandykes, and Harlequins; and because Wilkes was not mask enough, we had a man dressed like him, with a visor, in imitation of his squint, and a Cap of Liberty on a pole. In short, sixteen or eighteen young lords have given the town a masquerade, and politics for the last fortnight were forced to give way to habit-makers. The ball was last night at Soho, and, if possible, was more magnificent than the King of Denmark's. The bishops opposed: he of London formally remonstrated to the King, who did not approve it, but could not help him. The consequence was that four divine vessels belonging to the holy fathers, alias their wives, were at this masquerade. Monkey again! A fair widow, who once bore my whole name and now bears half of it, was there with one of those whom the newspapers call *great personages*,—he dressed like Edward the Fourth, she like Elizabeth Woodville, in gray and pearls, with a

black veil. Methinks it was not very difficult to find out the meaning of those masks.

As one of my ancient passions, formerly, was masquerades, I had a large trunk of dresses by me. I dressed out a thousand young Conways and Cholmondeleys, and went with more pleasure to see them pleased than when I formerly delighted in that diversion myself. It has cost me a great headache, and I shall probably never go to another. A symptom appeared of the change that has happened in the people.

The mob was beyond all belief; they held flambeaux to the windows of every coach, and demanded to have the masks pulled off and put on at their pleasure, but with extreme good-humor and civility. I was with Lady Hertford and two of her daughters in their coach; the mob took me for Lord Hertford, and huzzaed and blessed me! One fellow cried out: "Are you for Wilkes?" another said; "D—n you, you fool, what has Wilkes to do with a masquerade?" . . .

MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU TO MRS. ROBINSON.

LONDON, December 29, 1779.

. . . I approve much of your getting a dance once a week for the young folks, and I am par-

---

ticularly glad my nephew is of the party. Grace of person is more important for a woman than a man, but the capacity of dancing a minuet is more serviceable to a young man, for by so doing he obliges many young ladies, while the minuet miss seldom pleases any girl but herself. Unless a girl is very beautiful, very well shaped, and very genteel, she gives little pleasure to the spectators of her minuet; and, indeed, so unpolite are the sitters-by in all assemblies, that they express a most ungrateful joy when the minuets are over. For my part, though I feel as great *ennui* as my neighbors on those occasions, I never allow myself to appear so; for I look upon a minuet to be generally an act of filial piety, which gives real pleasure to fathers, mothers, and aunts. . . . In France good minuets are clapped, but I believe no nation arrived at such a degree of civilization as to *encore* them. . . .

---

MISS HANNAH MORE TO HER SISTER.

HAMPTON, 1782.

. . . On Monday I was at a very great assembly at the Bishop of St. Asaph's. Conceive to yourself one hundred and fifty or two

hundred people met together, dressed in the extremity of the fashion ; painted as red as bacchanals ; poisoning the air with perfumes ; treading on each other's gowns ; making the crowd they blame ; not one in ten able to get a chair ; protesting they are engaged to ten other places, and lamenting the fatigue they are not obliged to endure ; ten or a dozen card-tables crammed with dowagers of quality, grave ecclesiastics, and yellow admirals ; and you have an idea of an assembly. I never go to these things when I can possibly avoid it, and stay, when there, as few minutes as I can. . . .

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MRS. RICHARD TRENCH TO HER HUSBAND.

BATH, February 22, 1812.

All Bath is much more interested at present in Mrs. Williams's, late Mrs. Bristow's, dancing than in the change of ministry. She announced her intention of making up a French country-dance last Thursday, and it attracted several hundreds—partly from the reputation of her beauty and dancing, partly from the singularity of seeing a woman past fifty, and a grandmother, still so handsome, and able to perform in a *cotillon*. She danced, I hear, not in the theatri-

cal indelicate manner of the present day, but with the flowing gracefulness of the preceding, and is to perform again next Thursday, when a much greater crowd is expected, as those who came to ridicule her stayed to admire, except a few inflexible Bath Cats. I fear I must not venture that evening, as, without going very early, no art or good luck could secure a place where I could see her. Her husband danced in the same dance as her *vis-à-vis* (which, you know, is not her partner), and performed also remarkably well; but he is a youngish man. . . .

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MRS. RICHARD TRENCH TO HER HUSBAND.

BATH, March 12, 1813.

. . . —— thought Miss K. handsome on the report of *two or three* people, but *four or five* have found her coarse, slouchy, red-armed, and somewhat like a housemaid; you know how much “love’s arrows go by hearsay.” Moreover, she *splashed* through a *bolero* at an assembly where no one else danced but her and her partner; and with her large figure and strong countenance looked as if she were going to *box*. *That* is an improvement on the general expression of the dance, which always seems to

say: "My name is Temptation ; touch me not." This ingenious dance is, you know, contrived to show how great a degree of assurance and *airs de dragon* can be united to pretty music and measured steps. Its gayety and boldness will always recommend it to the majority ; but there cannot be worse taste than making *young ladies* the performers. . . .

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MRS. SARAH SIDDONS TO MRS. FITZ HUGH.

LONDON, July 12, 1819.

Well, my dear friend, though I am not of rank and condition to be myself at the Prince's ball, my fine clothes, at any rate, will have that honor. Lady B. has borrowed my *Lady Macbeth*'s finest banquet dress, and I wish her ladyship joy in wearing it, for I found the weight of it almost too much for endurance for half an hour. How will she be able to carry it for such a length of time? But young and old, it seems, are expected to appear, upon that "high solemnity," in splendid and fanciful apparel, and many of these beauties will appear in my stage finery.

Lady C. at first intended to present herself (as she said very drolly) as a vestal virgin, but

has now decided upon the dress of a fair Circassian. I should like to see this gorgeous assembly, and I have some thoughts of walking in in the last dress of *Lady Macbeth*, and swear I came there in my sleep. But enough of this nonsense.

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MRS. SARA COLERIDGE TO EDWARD QUILLINAN.

LONDON, February 9, 1850.

. . . I go sometimes to evening parties, and twice, nay thrice, of late, have chaperonified at balls! I do think, of all the maternal self-sacrifices and devotednesses that can be named, that is the greatest. If it was not for the supper!—actually I have gone down to supper twice, in the course of the evening, out of sheer exhaustion. On the last occasion I fell in with Barry Cornwall. It was like getting into an oasis, with a clear stream bubbling along under beeches and spreading planes and rosebushes and geranium tufts, and an enamelled flooring of crocus, auricula, and violet, to be taken care of by a literary man, and have a bit of poetical and literary talk after the weariness of witnessing for hours that eternal scuffle and whirl—H—whirling around the room for ever and ever with first a black-haired and then a brown-

haired damsel in his arms. (What queer indecorums these waltzes are! If twenty years ago one could have seen a set of waltzers of to-day through a time telescope or *future*-scope, how we should have turned up the corners of our eyne!) . . .

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MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER TO MISS CATHERINE TALBOT.

ENFIELD, June 14, 1748.

. . . In the evening my Lord W. (not Lady W.) carried us to Ranelagh; I do not know how I might have liked the place in a more giddy humor, but it did not then strike me with any agreeable impression; but indeed, for the most part, these tumultuous torchlight entertainments are very apt to put me in mind of the revel routs of Comus. I was best pleased with walking about the gardens; it was a delightful evening, and with two or three people I should have thought them quite charming, but these scenes to me lose much of their beauty and propriety in a noisy crowd. "Soft stillness and the night and the touches of sweet harmony" are naturally adapted to a kind of discourse vastly different from that of beaux and fine ladies. In the room we met with your

friend, and my friend, the knight of the woful countenance, Sir T. R., who looks more wofully than ever, and is a mere ghost. Only think what kind of an appearance that must be which is but the ghost of Sir T. R.! He entertained us with tea; and with all that dismality of aspect, there were some very comical scenes passed by way of message between him and his former dulcinea, Lady *Jingle*. This is a sobriquet of Miss Ward's, and admirably proper to the person to whom it is applied, but I really believe you are not acquainted with her. Miss Ward and I left Don Quixote uttering prodigious things on the subject of his passion to L. W. and Mrs. R., while we retired quietly to the farther corner of the box, drank a quart of tea, and entertained ourselves with such kind of discourse as I believe is not often talked at Ranelagh. We returned to Hyde Park about eleven, and from thence I walked home. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

STRAWBERRY HILL, May 3, 1749.

I am come hither for a few days, to repose myself after a torrent of diversions, and am writing to you in my charming bow window

with a tranquillity and satisfaction which, I fear, I am grown old enough to prefer to the hurry of amusements, in which the whole world has lived for the last week. We have at last celebrated the peace, and that as much in extremes as we generally do every thing, whether we have reason to be glad or sorry, pleased or angry. Last Tuesday it was proclaimed; the king did not go to St. Paul's, but at night the whole town was illuminated. The next day was what was called "a jubilee-masquerade in the Venetian manner," at Ranelagh; it had nothing Venetian in it, but was by far the best understood and the prettiest spectacle I ever saw; nothing in a fairy tale ever surpassed it. One of the proprietors, who is a German, and belongs to court, had got my Lady Yarmouth to persuade the king to order it. It began at three o'clock, and, about five, people of fashion began to go. When you entered, you found the whole garden filled with masks and spread with tents, which remained all night *very com-modely*. In one quarter was a May-pole dressed with garlands, and people dancing round it to a tabor and pipe and rustic music, all masqued, as were all the various bands of music, that

were disposed in different parts of the garden—some like huntsmen with French horns, some like peasants, with a troop of harlequins and scaramouches in the little open temple on the mount. On the canal was a sort of gondola, adorned with flags and streamers, and filled with music, rowing about. All round outside of the amphitheatre were shops, filled with Dresden china, japan, etc., and all the shopkeepers in mask. The amphitheatre was illuminated; and in the middle was a circular bower, composed of all kinds of firs in tubs from twenty to thirty feet high; under them orange-trees, with small lamps in each orange; and below them all sorts of the finest auriculas in pots, and festoons of natural flowers hanging from tree to tree. Between the arches too were firs, and smaller ones in the balconies above. There were booths for tea and wine, gaming-tables and dancing, and about two thousand persons. In short, it pleased me more than any thing I ever saw. It is to be once more, and probably finer as to dresses, as there has since been a subscription-masquerade, and people will go in their rich habits. The next day were the fireworks, which by no

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means answered the expense, the length of preparation, and the expectation that had been raised ; indeed, for a week before, the town was like a country fair, the streets filled from morning to night, scaffolds building wherever you could or could not see, and coaches arriving from every corner of the kingdom. This hurry and lively scene, with the sight of the immense crowd in the Park and on every house, the guards, and the machine itself, which was very beautiful, was all that was worth seeing. The rockets, and whatever was thrown up into the air, succeeded mighty well ; but the wheels, and all that was to compose the principal part, were pitiful and ill-conducted, with no changes of colored fires and shapes ; the illumination was mean, and lighted so slowly that scarce anybody had patience to wait the finishing ; and then, what contributed to the awkwardness of the whole, was the right pavilion catching fire, and being burnt down in the middle of the show. The king, the duke, and Princess Emily saw it from the library, with their courts ; the prince and princess, with their children, from Lady Middlesex's ; no place being provided for them, nor any invitation given to the library.

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The Lords and Commons had galleries built for them and the chief citizens along the rails of the mall; the Lords had four tickets apiece, and each Commoner, at first, but two, till the Speaker bounced and obtained a third. Very little mischief was done, and but two persons killed. At Paris there were forty killed and near three hundred wounded, by a dispute between the French and Italians in the management, who, quarrelling for precedence in lighting the fires, both lighted at once and blew up the whole. Our mob was extremely tranquil, and very unlike those I remember in my father's time, when it was a measure in the Opposition to work up every thing to mischief—the excise and the French players, the convention and the gin-act. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO GEORGE MONTAGU.

ARLINGTON STREET, June 23, 1750.

. . . I had a card from Lady Caroline Peter-sham to go with her to Vauxhall. I went ac-cordingly to her house, and found her and the little Ashe, or the Pollard Ashe, as they call her; they had just finished their last layer of red, and looked as handsome as crimson could make them. . . . We issued into the mall to

assemble our company, which was all the town, if we could get it; for just so many had been summoned, except Harry Vane, whom we met by chance. We mustered the Duke of Kingston, whom Lady Caroline says she has been trying for these seven years, but alas! his beauty is at the fall of the leaf; Lord March, Mr. Whitehead, a pretty Miss Beauclerc, and a very foolish Miss Sparre. These two damsels were trusted by their mothers for the first time of their lives to the matronly care of Lady Caroline. As we sailed up the mall with all our colors flying, Lord Petersham, with his hose and legs twisted to every point of crossness, strode by us on the outside, and repassed again on the return. At the end of the mall she called to him; he would not answer; she gave a familiar spring, and, between laugh and confusion, ran up to him, "My lord! my lord! why, you don't see us!" We advanced at a little distance, not a little awkward in expectation how all this would end, for my lord never stirred his hat, or took the least notice of anybody; she said, "Do you go with us, or are *you going anywhere else?*"—"I don't go with you, I am going *somewhere else*"; and away he

stalked, as sulky as a ghost that nobody will speak to first. We got into the best order we could, and marched to our barge, with a boat of French horns attending, and little Ashe singing. We paraded some time up the river, and at last debarked at Vauxhall: there, if we had so pleased, we might have had the vivacity of our party increased by a quarrel; for a Mrs. Loyd, who is supposed to be married to Lord Haddington, seeing the two girls following Lady Petersham and Miss Ashe, said aloud: "Poor girls, I am sorry to see them in such bad company!" Miss Sparre, who desired nothing so much as the fun of seeing a duel,—a thing which, though she is fifteen, she has never been so lucky to see,—took due pains to make Lord March resent this; but he, who is very lively and agreeable, laughed her out of this charming frolic with a great deal of humor. . . . At last, we assembled in our booth, Lady Caroline in the front, with the vizor of her hat erect, and looking gloriously jolly and handsome. She had fetched my brother Orford from the next box, where he was enjoying himself with his *petite partie*, to help us to mince chickens. We minced seven chickens into a china dish, which

Lady Caroline stewed over a lamp with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring and rattling, and laughing, and we every minute expecting to have the dish fly about our ears. She had brought Betty, the fruit girl, with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Rogers's, and made her wait upon us, and then made her sup by us at a little table. The conversation was no less lively than the whole transaction. . . . In short, the whole air of our party was sufficient, as you will easily imagine, to take up the whole attention of the garden ; so much so, that from eleven o'clock till half an hour after one we had the whole concourse round our booth: at last, they came into the little gardens of each booth on the sides of ours, till Harry Vane took up a bumper, and drank their healths, and was proceeding to treat them with still greater freedom. It was three o'clock before we got home. . . .

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MISS ELIZABETH CARTER TO MISS CATHERINE TALBOT.

DEAL, January 1, 1750.

. . . Our great people break through all the sacred authority of law, and seem to lose all sense of what is serious and decent in pursuit of French diversions, and are surrounded by

French tailors, French valets, French dancing masters, and French cooks, while many of their unhappy countrymen are starving for want of employment. Our fine ladies disgrace the "human shape divine," and become helpless to themselves and troublesome to all the world besides, with French hoops, and run into an indecent extravagance of dress, inconsistent with all rules of sober appearance and good economy. Little people always follow the example of their superiors, and we misses in the country have our heads equally turned with French fashions and French fooleries, which makes us break the law, and smuggle for the sake of getting French finery. In return for an hundred mischiefs, I do not recollect any one French invention that has been of any real benefit to this nation, and so till you have fairly convinced me that French fashions are for the good of my country, I shall not in any wise endeavor to rectify in myself the spirit of the true original British crab.

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HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

ARLINGTON STREET, February 2, 1770.

. . . The gaming at Almack's, which has taken the *pas* of White's, is worthy the decline

of our Empire, or Commonwealth, which you please. The young men of the age lose five, ten, fifteen thousand pounds in an evening there. Lord Stavordale, not one-and-twenty, lost eleven thousand there last Tuesday, but recovered it by one great hand at hazard: he swore a great oath,—“Now, if I had been playing *deep*, I might have won millions.” His cousin, Charles Fox, shines equally there and in the House of Commons. He was twenty-one yesterday se’nnight, and is already one of our best speakers. Yesterday he was made a Lord of the Admiralty. We are not a great age, but surely we are tending to some great revolution. Adieu !

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HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

STRAWBERRY HILL, May 6, 1770.

. . . What do you think of a winter-Ranelagh\* erecting in Oxford Road at the expense of sixty thousand pounds? The new bank, including the value of the ground, and of the houses demolished to make room for it, will cost three hundred thousand; and erected, as my Lady Townley says, *by sober citizens too!*

\* The Pantheon.

I have touched before to you on the incredible profusion of our young men of fashion. I know a younger brother who literally gives a flower-woman half a guinea every morning for a bunch of roses for the nosegay in his button-hole. There has lately been an auction of stuffed birds, and as natural history is in fashion, there are physicians and others who paid forty and fifty guineas for a single Chinese pheasant : you may buy a live one for five. After this it is not extraordinary that pictures should be dear. We have at present three exhibitions. One West, who paints history in the taste of Poussin, gets three hundred pounds for a piece not too large to hang over a chimney. He has merit, but it is hard and heavy, and far unworthy of such prices. The rage to see these exhibitions is so great that sometimes one can not pass through the streets where they are. But it is incredible what sums are raised by mere exhibitions of any thing ; a new fashion, and to enter at which you pay a shilling or half-a-crown. Another rage is for prints of English portraits : I have been collecting them above thirty years, and originally never gave for a mezzotinto above one or two shillings.

The lowest are now a crown; most, from half a guinea to a guinea. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

STRAWBERRY HILL, June 18, 1777.

. . . One effect the American war has not had, that it ought to have had; it has not brought us to our senses. Silly dissipation rather increases, and without an object. The present folly is late hours. Everybody tries to be particular by being too late, and as everybody tries it, nobody is so. It is the fashion now to go to Ranelagh two hours after it is over. You may not believe this, but it is literal. The music ends at ten; the company go at twelve. Lord Derby's cook lately gave him warning. The man owned he liked his place, but he said he should be killed by dressing suppers at three in the morning. The earl asked him coolly at how much he valued his life. That is, he would have paid him for killing him. You see we have brought the spirit of calculation to perfection! I do not regret being old, for I see nothing I envy. To live in a crowd, to arrive everywhere too late, and to sell annuities for forty times more than I can ever

pay, are not such supreme joys as to make me wish myself young again: indeed, one might execute all these joys at fourscore. I am glad the emperor did not visit us. I hope he is gone home, thinking France the most trifling nation in Europe. . . .

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGUE TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

VIENNA, September 14 (o. s.), 1716.

Though I have so lately troubled you, my dear sister, with a long letter, yet I will keep my promise in giving you an account of my first going to court.

In order to that ceremony I was squeezed up in a gown, and adorned with a gorget and the implements thereunto belonging; a dress very inconvenient, but which certainly shews the neck and shape to great advantage. I cannot forbear giving you some description of the fashions here, which are more monstrous and contrary to all common-sense and reason than 't is possible for you to imagine. They build certain fabrics of gauze on their heads, about a yard high, consisting of three or four stories, fortified with numberless yards of heavy ribbon. The foundation of this structure is a thing they

call a *bourle*, which is exactly of the same shape and kind, but about four times as big, as those rolls our prudent milk-maids make use of to fix their pails upon. This machine they cover with their own hair, which they mix with a great deal of false, it being a particular beauty to have their heads too large to go into a moderate tub. Their hair is prodigiously powdered to conceal the mixture, and set out with three or four rows of bodkins (wonderfully large), that stick out two or three inches from the hair, made of diamonds, pearls, red, green, and yellow stones, that it certainly requires as much art and experience to carry the load upright as to dance upon May-day with the garland. Their whalebone petticoats outdo ours by several yards' circumference, and cover some acres of ground. . . .

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MRS PENDARVES (*Afterwards Mrs. Delany*) TO MRS. ANN GRANVILLE.

LONDON, January 23, 1738.

. . . After much persuasion and many debates within myself, I consented to go with Lady Dysart to the Prince's birthday, humbly drest in my pink damask, white and gold handkerchief, plain green ribbon, and Lady Sunder-

land's buckles for my stays. I was a *good foil* for those that were there. I never saw so much finery without any mixture of trumpery in my life. Lady Huntingdon's, as the most extraordinary, I must describe first. Her petticoat was black velvet embroidered with chenille, the pattern a *large stone vase* filled with *ramping flowers* that spread almost over a breadth of the petticoat from the bottom to the top; between each vase of flowers was a pattern of gold shells, and foliage embossed and most heavily rich; the gown was white satin embroidered also with chenille mixt with gold ornaments, *no vases on the sleeve*, but *two or three on the tail*; it was a most labored piece of finery, the pattern much properer for a stucco staircase than the apparel of a lady,—a mere shadow that tottered under every step she took under the load. . . .

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MRS. MARY DELANY TO MRS. DEWES.

LONDON, January 21, 1746.

. . . There was not much new finery, new clothes not being required on this birthday. They curl and wear a great many *tawdry* things, but there is such a variety in the manner of dress that I don't know what to tell you

is the fashion ; the only thing that seems general are hoops of an enormous size, and most people wear vast winkers to their heads. They are now come to such an extravagance in those two particulars that I soon expect to see the other extreme of thread-paper heads and no hoops, and from appearing like so many *blown bladders* we shall look like so many *bodkins stalking about*. . . .

MISS HANNAH MORE TO HER SISTER.

LONDON, 1776.

. . . Again I am annoyed by the foolish absurdity of the present mode of dress. Some ladies carry on their heads a large quantity of fruit. . . . Some, at the back of their perpendicular caps, hang four or five ostrich feathers, of different colors, etc. Spirit of Addison ! Thou pure and gentle shade, arise ! Thou who, with such fine humor, and such polished sarcasm, didst lash the cherry-colored hood and the party patches, and cut down with a trenchant sickle a whole harvest of follies and absurdities,—awake ! for the follies thou didst lash were but the beginning of follies ; and the absurdities thou didst censure were but the seeds of absurdities ! . . .

MISS JANE AUSTEN TO HER SISTER.

BATH, June 2, 1799.

. . . Flowers are very much worn, and fruit is still more the thing. Elizabeth has a bunch of strawberries, and I have seen grapes, cherries, plums, and apricots. There are likewise almonds and raisins, French plums, and tamarinds at the grocers, but I have never seen any of them in hats. A plum or greengage would cost three shillings; cherries and grapes about five, I believe, but this at some of the dearest shops. . . .

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MISS LUCY AIKEN TO WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

HAMPSTEAD, August 9, 1842.

It grieves me to learn that illness has been the cause of your long silence; but it is past, I hope, and if your summer be bright and balmy like ours, it will give you strength to support the rigors of the coming winter. But O that you would come to recruit in our milder climate! We should then soon exorcise that strange phantom of a petticoated man which your imagination has conjured up during your illness, and some demon has whispered you to call an Englishwoman. I am well persuaded that you could have formed no such notion of

us when you were here, although I believe you then saw but little society, and that of an inferior kind.

As to the very delicate subject of comparative beauty, our travellers attest that you have many very pretty girls; so have we: and even Miss Sedgwick pronounces that "the English-woman is magnificent from twenty to five-and-forty." We are satisfied; so let it rest. With respect to our *step* or *stride*, as you say, I have a little history to give you. Down to five-and-forty or fifty years ago, our ladies, tight-laced and "propped on French heels," had a short, mincing step, pinched figures, pale faces, weak nerves, much affectation, a delicate helplessness, and miserable health. Physicians prescribed exercise, but to little purpose. Then came that event which is the beginning or end of every thing—the French Revolution. The Parisian women, amongst other restraints, salutary or the contrary, emancipated themselves from their stays, and kicked off their *petits talons*. We followed the example, and, by way of improving upon it, learned to march of the drill-sergeant, mounted boots, and bid defiance to dirt and foul weather. We have now well-

developed figures, blooming cheeks, active habits, firm nerves, natural and easy manners, a scorn of affectation, and vigorous constitutions. If your fair daughters would also learn to *step out*, their bloom would be less transient, and fewer would fill untimely graves. I admit, indeed, *some* unnecessary inelegance in the step of our pedestrian fair ones; but this does not extend to ladies of quality, or *real* gentle-women, who take the air chiefly in carriages or on horseback. They walk with the same quiet grace that pervades all their deportment, and to which you have seen nothing similar or comparable. . . .

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MISS ELIZABETH CARTER TO MRS. VESEY.

LONDON, April 17, 1772.

. . . I know of nothing very remarkable going on at present, except preparations for a masquerade at the Pantheon. Perhaps you may think it one singular phenomenon in the present winter, that the macaroni gentlemen wear artificial nosegays. Surely this species of animal is not an English character. Such a composition of monkey and demon, as at one half of the day appears to be studying all the tricks of the most trifling and contemptible

foppery, and in the other is raving and blaspheming at a gaming-table, must be an aggregate of all the follies and all the crimes that a worthless head and a profligate heart can collect from all parts of the globe. Next winter may perhaps furnish a companion to the picture, and exhibit the coterie ladies making riots at the play-houses, armed with oaken clubs, knocking down watchmen, and demolishing lamps,—and fainting away at the sight of a spider or an earwig. . . .

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WILLIAM COWPER TO WILLIAM UNWIN.

OLNEY, August 6, 1780.

. . . When we look back upon our forefathers, we seem to look back upon the people of another nation, almost upon creatures of another species. Their vast rambling mansions, spacious halls, and painted casements, the Gothic porch smothered with honeysuckles, their little gardens and high walls, their box-edgings, balls of holly, and yew-tree statues, are become so entirely unfashionable now, that we can hardly believe it possible that a people who resembled us so little in their taste, should resemble us in any thing else. But in every thing else, I suppose, they were our counter-

parts exactly ; and time, that has sewed up the slashed sleeve, and reduced the large trunk hose to a neat pair of silk stockings, has left human nature just where it found it. The inside of the man at least has undergone no change. His passions, appetites, and aims are just what they ever were. They wear perhaps a handsomer disguise than they did in days of yore, for philosophy and literature will have their effect upon the exterior ; but in every other respect a modern is only an ancient in a different dress.

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## WILLIAM COWPER TO MRS. JOHN NEWTON.

OLNEY, August 16, 1781.

. . . While the world lasts, fashion will continue to lead it by the nose. And, after all, what can fashion do for its most obsequious followers? It can ring the changes upon the same things, and it can do no more. Whether our hats be white or black, our caps high or low,—whether we wear two watches or one, is of little consequence. There is indeed an appearance of variety ; but the folly and vanity that dictates and adopts the change, are invariably the same. When the fashions of a particular period appear more reasonable than

those of the preceding, it is not because the world is grown more reasonable than it was, but because, in a course of perpetual changes, some of them must sometimes happen to be for the better. Neither do I suppose the preposterous customs that prevail at present, a proof of its greater folly. In a few years, perhaps next year, the fine gentleman will shut up his umbrella, and give it to his sister, filling his hand with a crab-tree cudgel instead of it ; and when he has done so, will he be wiser than now ? By no means. The love of change will have betrayed him into a propriety, which in reality he has no taste for, all his merit on the occasion amounting to no more than this—that being weary of one plaything, he has taken up another. . . .

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MRS. PENDARVES (*afterwards Mrs. Delany*) TO MRS. ANN GRANVILLE.

SOMERSET HOUSE, October 12, 1727.

You require a full and true account of all the pomp I saw yesterday.\* I cannot say my dearest sister is unreasonable, but how can I answer your demands ? No words (at least that I can command) can describe the magnificence

\* The coronation of George II. and Queen Caroline.

my eyes beheld. The book I sent you informs you of all the ceremony and manner of proceeding. I was a spectator in Westminster Hall, from whence the procession begun, and after their Majesties were crowned, they returned with all their noble followers to dine. The dresses of the ladies were becoming, and most of them immensely rich. Lady Delawar was one of the best figures; the Duchess of Queensborough depended so much upon her native beauty that she despised all adornments, nor had not one jewel, riband, or puff to set her off, but everybody thought she did *not* appear to advantage. . . .

The Queen never was so well liked; her clothes were extravagantly fine, though they did not make show enough for the occasion, but she walked gracefully and smiled on all as she passed by. . . .

I could hardly see the King, for he walked so much *under* his canopy, that he was almost hid from me by the people that surrounded him; but though the Queen was also under a canopy, she walked so forward that she was distinguished by everybody. The room was finely illuminated, and though there was 1,800 candles, besides

what were on the tables, they were all lighted in less than three minutes by an invention of Mr. Heidegger's, which succeeded to the admiration of all spectators; the branches that held the candles were all gilt and in the form of pyramids. I leave it to your lively imagination after this, to have a notion of the splendor of the place so filled and so illuminated. I forgot to tell you Lady Carteret looked charmingly, and nothing was ever more beautiful than her fine throat, which appeared to the utmost advantage. . . .

I got home without any accident about ten of the clock at night. It was not disagreeable to be taken notice of by one's acquaintance when they appeared to so much advantage, for everybody I knew came under the place where I sate to offer me meat and drink, which was drawn up from below into the galleries by baskets at the end of a long string, which they filled with cold meat and bread, sweetmeats and wine. . . .

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THOMAS GRAY TO JAMES BROWN.

LONDON, September 24, 1761.

I set out at half an hour past four in the morning for the coronation,\* and (in the midst

\* The coronation of George III.

of perils and dangers) arrived very safe at my Lord Chamberlain's box in Westminster Hall. It was on the left hand of the throne, over that appropriated to the foreign ministers. Opposite to us was the box of the Earl Marshal and other great officers, and below it that of the princess and younger part of the royal family. . . . The several bodies that were to form the procession issued from behind the throne gradually and in order, and, proceeding down the steps, were ranged on either side of the hall. All the privy councillors that are commoners (I think) were there, except Mr. Pitt, mightily dressed in rich stuffs of gold and colors, with long flowing wigs, some of them comical figures enough. The Knights of the Bath, with their high plumage, were very ornamental. Of the Scotch peers or peeresses that you see in the list, very few walked, and of the English dowagers as few, though many of them were in town, and among the spectators. . . . All these I beheld at great leisure. Then the princess and royal family entered their box. The Queen and then the King took their places in their chairs of state, glittering with jewels, for the hire of which, beside all his own, he paid £9,000, and the dean and chapter (who had

been waiting without doors a full hour and a half) brought up the regalia, which the Duke of Ancaster received and placed on the table. Here ensued great confusion in the delivering them out to the lords who were appointed to bear them ; the heralds were stupid ; the great officers knew nothing of what they were doing. The Bishop of Rochester would have dropped the crown if it had not been pinned to the cushion, and the King was often obliged to call out, and set matters right ; but the sword of state had been entirely forgot, so Lord Huntingdon was forced to carry the lord mayor's great two-handed sword instead of it. This made it later than ordinary before they got under their canopies and set forward. I should have told you that the old Bishop of Lincoln, with his stick, went doddling by the side of the Queen, and the Bishop of Chester had the pleasure of bearing the gold paten. When they were gone we went down to dinner, for there were three rooms below, where the Duke of Devonshire was so good as to feed us with great cold sirloins of beef, legs of mutton, fillets of veal, and other substantial viands and liquors, which we devoured all higgledy-piggle-

dy, like porters, after which every one scrambled up again, and seated themselves. The tables were now spread, the cold viands eat, and on the King's table and sideboard a great show of gold plate, and a dessert representing Parnassus, with abundance of figures of Muses, Arts, etc., designed by Lord Talbot. This was so high that those at the end of the hall could see neither King nor Queen at supper. When they returned it was so dark that people without doors scarce saw any thing of the procession, and as the hall had then no other light than two long ranges of candles at each of the peers' tables, we saw almost as little as they; only one perceived the lords and ladies sidling in and taking their places to dine; but the instant the Queen's canopy entered, fire was given to all the lustres at once by trains of prepared flax that reached from one to the other. To me it seemed an interval of not half a minute before the whole was in a blaze of splendor. It is true that for that half minute it rained fire upon the heads of all the spectators (the flax falling in large flakes), and the ladies, Queen and all were in no small terror, but no mischief ensued. It was out as soon as it fell,

and the most magnificent spectacle I ever beheld remained. The King (bowing to the lords as he passed), with his crown on his head, and the sceptre and orb in his hands, took his place with great majesty and grace. So did the Queen, with her crown, sceptre, and rod. Then supper was served in gold plate. The Earl of Talbot, Duke of Bedford, and Earl of Effingham, in their robes, all three on horseback, prancing and curveting like the hobby-horses in the "Rehearsal," ushered in the courses to the foot of the haut-pas. Between the courses the champion performed his part with applause. The Earl of Denbigh carved for the King, the Earl of Holderness for the Queen. They both eat like farmers. At the board's end, on the right, supped the Dukes of York and Cumberland; on the left, Lady Augusta; all of them very rich in jewels. The maple cups, the wafers, the faulcons, etc., were brought up and presented with form; three persons were knighted, and before ten the King and Queen retired. Then I got a scrap of supper, and at one o'clock I walked home. So much for the spectacle, which in magnificence surpassed every thing I have seen. . . .

HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

STRAWBERRY HILL, September 28, 1761.

What is the finest sight in the world? A coronation. What do people talk most about? A coronation. What is delightful to have passed? A coronation. Indeed, one had need be a handsome young peeress not to be fatigued to death with it. After being exhausted with hearing of nothing else for six weeks, and having every cranny of my ideas stuffed with velvet and ermine, and tresses, and jewels, I thought I was very cunning in going to lie in Palace Yard, that I might not sit up all night in order to seize a place. The consequence of this wise scheme was, that I did not get a wink of sleep all night; hammering of scaffolds, shouting of people, relieving of guards, and jangling of bells was the concert I heard from twelve to six, when I rose; and it was noon before the procession was ready to set forth, and night before it returned from the Abbey. I then saw the hall, the dinner, and the champion,—a gloriously-illuminated chamber, a wretched banquet, and a foolish puppet-show. A trial of a peer, though by no means so sumptuous, is a preferable sight, for the latter is interesting. At a

coronation one sees the peerage as exalted as they like to be, and at a trial as much humbled as a plebeian wishes them. I tell you nothing of who looked well ; you know them no more than if I told you of the next coronation. Yes, two ancient dames whom you remember, were still ornaments of the show—the Duchess of Queensberry and Lady Westmoreland. Some of the peeresses were so fond of their robes that they graciously exhibited themselves for a whole day before to all the company their servants could invite to see them. A maid from Richmond begged leave to stay in town because the Duchess of Montrose was only to be seen from two to four. The heralds were so ignorant of their business that, though pensioned for nothing but to register lords and ladies, and what belongs to them, they advertised in the newspapers for the Christian names and places of abode of the peeresses. The king complained of such omissions and of the want of precedents; Lord Effingham, the Earl Marshal, told him it was true there had been great neglect in that office, but he had now taken such care of registering directions, that *next coronation* would be conducted with the

greatest order imaginable. The king was so diverted with this *flattering* speech that he made the Earl repeat it several times.

On this occasion one saw to how high-water-mark extravagance is risen in England. At the coronation of George II. my mother gave forty guineas for a dining-room, scaffold, and bed-chamber. An exactly parallel apartment, only with rather a worse view, was this time set at three hundred and fifty guineas—a tolerable rise in thirty-three years! The platform from St. Margaret's round-house to the church door, which formerly let for forty pounds, went this time for two thousand four hundred pounds. Still more was given for the inside of the Abbey. The prebends would like a coronation every year. The king paid nine thousand pounds for the hire of jewels; indeed, last time, it cost my father fourteen hundred to bezewel my Lady Orford. . . .

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THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO MISS HANNAH MORE MACAULAY.

LONDON, September 9, 1831.

I scarcely know where to begin, or where to end, my story of the magnificence of yesterday.\* No pageant can be conceived more

\*The coronation of William IV.

splendid. The newspapers will happily save me the trouble of relating minute particulars. I will therefore give you an account of my own proceedings, and mention what struck me most. I rose at six. The cannon awaked me; and, as soon as I got up, I heard the bells pealing on every side from all the steeples in London. I put on my court-dress, and looked a perfect Lovelace in it. . . . Our party being complete, we drove through crowds of people and ranks of Horse-guards in cuirasses and helmets to Westminster Hall, which we reached as the clock struck eight.

The House of Commons was crowded, and the whole assembly was in uniform. After prayers we went out in order by lot, the Speaker going last. My county, Wiltshire, was among the first drawn; so I got an excellent place in the Abbey, next to Lord Mahon, who is a very great favorite of mine, and a very amusing companion, though a bitter Tory.

Our gallery was immediately over the great altar. The whole vast avenue of lofty pillars was directly in front of us. At eleven the guns fired, the organ struck up, and the procession entered. I never saw so magnificent a scene.

All down that immense vista of gloomy arches there was one blaze of scarlet and gold. First came heralds in coats stiff with embroidered lions, unicorns, and harps ; then nobles bearing the regalia, with pages in rich dresses carrying their coronets on cushions ; then the Dean and Prebendaries of Westminster in copes of cloth of gold ; then a crowd of beautiful girls and women, or at least of girls and women who at a distance looked altogether beautiful, attending on the Queen. Her train of purple velvet and ermine was borne by six of these fair creatures. All the great officers of state in full robes, the Duke of Wellington with his Marshal's staff, the Duke of Devonshire with his white rod, Lord Grey with the Sword of State, and the Chancellor with his seals, came in procession. Then all the Royal Dukes with their trains borne behind them, and last the King leaning on two Bishops. I do not, I dare say, give you the precise order. In fact, it was impossible to discern any order. The whole Abbey was one blaze of gorgeous dresses mingled with lovely faces.

The Queen behaved admirably, with wonderful grace and dignity; the King, very awk-

wardly. The Duke of Devonshire looked as if he came to be crowned instead of his master. I never saw so princely a manner and air. The Chancellor looked like Mephistopheles behind Margaret in the church. The ceremony was much too long, and some parts of it were carelessly performed. The Archbishop mumbled. The Bishop of London preached, well enough indeed, but not so effectively as the occasion required; and, above all, the bearing of the King made the foolish parts of the ritual appear monstrously ridiculous, and deprived many of the better parts of their proper effect. Persons who were at a distance perhaps, did not feel this; but I was near enough to see every turn of his finger and every glance of his eye. The moment of the crowning was extremely fine. When the Archbishop placed the crown on the head of the King the trumpets sounded, and the whole audience cried out "God save the King." All the Peers and Peeresses put on their coronets, and the blaze of splendor through the Abbey seemed to be doubled. The King was then conducted to the raised throne, where the Peers successively did him homage, each of them kissing his cheek and touching the crown. Some of them were cheered, which I

thought indecorous in such a place and on such an occasion. The Tories cheered the Duke of Wellington ; and our people, in revenge, cheered Lord Grey and Brougham. . . .

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CHARLES DARWIN TO SUSAN DARWIN.

LONDON, September 9, 1831.

. . . Yesterday all the shops were shut, so that I could do nothing; and I was child enough to give £1 1s. for an excellent seat to see the procession.\* And it certainly was very well worth seeing. I was surprised that any quantity of gold could make a long row of people quite glitter. It was like only what one sees in picture-books of Eastern processions. The King looked very well and seemed popular, but there was very little enthusiasm; so little that I can hardly think there will be a coronation this time fifty years.

The Life-Guards pleased me as much as any thing—they are quite magnificent; and it is beautiful to see them clear a crowd. You think that they must kill a score at least, and apparently they really hurt nobody, but most deucedly frighten them. Whenever a crowd was so dense that the people were forced off the causeway, one of these six-feet gentlemen, on

\*The coronation of William IV.

a black horse, rode straight at the place, making his horse rear very high, and fall on the thickest spot. You would suppose men were made of sponge to see them shrink away. . . .

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BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI TO HIS SISTER.

LONDON, June 29, 1838.

I went to the coronation after all.\* I did not get a dress till 2:30 on the morning of the ceremony, but it fitted me very well. It turned out that I had a very fine leg, which I never knew before! The pageant within the Abbey was without exception the most splendid, various, and interesting affair at which I ever was present. To describe it is of course useless. I had one of the best seats in the Abbey; indeed, our House had the best of every thing. I am very glad indeed that Ralph persuaded me to go, for it far exceeded my expectations. The Queen looked very well, and performed her part with great grace and completeness, which cannot in general be said of the other performers; they were always in doubt as to what came next, and you saw the want of rehearsal. The duke was loudly cheered when he made

\* The coronation of Victoria.

his homage. Melbourne looked very awkward and uncouth, with his coronet cocked over his nose, his robes under his feet, and holding the great sword of state like a butcher. Lyndhurst paid his homage with remarked grace, but instead of backing from the throne, turned his back on the sovereign. The Duchess of Sutherland walked, or rather stalked, up the Abbey like Juno ; she was full of her situation. Lady Jersey and Lady Londonderry blazed among the peeresses. . . .

The procession was a failure ; heavy, want of variety, and not enough music and troops. There are so few troops in the country that they cannot get up a review in Hyde Park for Soult, and keep on the fair, they are so ashamed. I saw Lord Ward after the ceremony, in a side room, drinking champagne out of a pewter pot, his coronet cocked aside, his robes disordered, and his arms akimbo, the very picture of Rochester. . . .

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THOMAS GRAY TO THOMAS WHARTON.

LONDON, January 31, 1731.

. . . One hears nothing of the King \* but what gives one the best opinion of him imagi-

\* George II.

nable. I hope it may hold. The royal family run loose about the world, and people do not know how to treat them, nor they how to be treated. They visit and are visited ; some come to the street door to receive them, and that, they say, is too much ; others to the head of the stairs, and that they think too little. Nobody sits down with them, not even in their own house, unless at a card-table, so the world are like to grow very weary of the honor. None but the Duke of York enjoy themselves (you know he always did), but the world seems weary of this honor too, for a different reason. I have just heard no bad story of him. When he was at Southampton, in the summer, there was a clergyman in the neighborhood with two very handsome daughters. He had soon wind of them, and dropped in for some reason or other, came again and again, and grew familiar enough to eat a bone of their mutton. At last he said to the father : " Miss — leads a mighty confined life here, always at home ; why can't you let one of them go and take an airing now and then with me in my chaise ? " " Ah, sir," says the parson, " do but look at them ; a couple of hale, fresh-colored, hearty

wenches! They need no airing; they are well enough; but there is their mother, poor woman, has been in a declining way many years. If your Royal Highness would give her an airing now and then, it would be doing us a great kindness indeed!" . . .

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MRS. MARY DELANY TO MISS DEWES.

February, 1769.

I read my dearest Mary's letter in the chaise, and was affected by your too great gratitude, my dear child. We trotted on briskly, chewing the cud upon the pleasure we had enjoyed at Richmond; when hark! I heard a shouting and calling which I thought belonged to some wagon or stage behind us, when a man clothed all in scarlet, with a musket in his hand, and fiercer than Captain Parlande, gave the postilion a smart slap on the back and cried out: "Stop, for his Majesty is on the road." The postilion, ignorant of etiquette, and smarting with resentment, was going to exercise his whip hand; I screaming out, "Stop, stop!" and Court the same at the other window, and we had just prevailed as *the post-chaise* passed by, and little did his Majesty know how he had fluttered one of his humble subjects. I grum-

bled at the insolence and rebellion of the postilion; Court complained of arbitrary power, and we argued the point—he maintaining that the public road should not be violated by these proceedings—I, that it was due to royalty to have all those marks of respect kept up; and how do you think the dispute ended? With infinite good humor, and a *strict* adherence to our *own opinions!* . . .

FRANCES BURNEY TO HER FATHER.

GLoucester House, Weymouth, July 13, 1789.

. . . His Majesty is in delightful health, and much-improved spirits. All agree he never looked better. The loyalty of all this place is excessive; they have dressed out every street with labels of “God Save the King”; all the shops have it over the doors; all the children have it in their hats, and all the sailors *in their voices*, for they never approach the house without shouting it aloud, nor see the King or his shadow, without beginning to huzza, and going on to three cheers.

The bathing-machines make it their motto over all their windows; and those bathers that belong to the royal dippers wear it in bandeaus on their bonnets, to go into the sea; and have

it again in large letters round their waists, to encounter the waves. Flannel dresses, tucked up, and no shoes nor stockings, with bandeaus and girdles, have a most singular appearance; and when first I surveyed these loyal nymphs it was with some difficulty I kept my features in order.

Nor is this all. Think but of the surprise of his Majesty, when, the first time of his bathing, he had no sooner popped his royal head under water than a band of music, concealed in a neighboring machine, struck up "God save great George our King."

One thing, however, was a little unlucky. When the mayor and burgesses came with the address, they requested leave to kiss hands: this was graciously accorded; but, the mayor advancing in a common way *to take the Queen's hand*, as he might that of any lady mayoress, Colonel Gwynn, who stood by, whispered: "You should have knelt, sir!"

"Sir," answered the poor mayor, "I cannot."

"Everybody does, sir."

"Sir,—I have a wooden leg!"

Poor man! 't was such a surprise! and such an excuse as no one could dispute.

But the absurdity of the matter followed; all the rest did the same; taking the same privilege, by the example, without the same or any cause!

We have just got Mrs. Piozzi's book here. My Royal Mistress is reading, and will then lend it me. Have you read it? . . .

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WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO LADY BLESSINGTON.

BATH, December 21, 1842.

. . . I am indeed very far from indifferent to the loss of poor Lady Belmore.

Thirty-seven years ago I began my acquaintance with her, and I liked her frankness so much, that I overcame my abhorrence of routs, and went at her desire to hers, although to no others. But then her small Sunday parties, never exceeding fourteen, and from which all but those whom she thought the pleasantest or the prettiest, were excluded! Ah! then, indeed, was I devout, and offered my little taper offerings up at shrine after shrine. Bath, in those days, was frequented for a few weeks by many persons of high rank, and there was none of that familiarity, even among themselves, which people now indulge in with their superiors of all sorts.

Centrifugal force is as needful to the order of society as the attraction of adhesion; and gravity (not excessive) adds grace to good humor. I thought so then, and I think so now. In too great closeness there is neither growth nor sunshine; it does only for dwarf plants. . . .

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THOMAS CAMPBELL TO DR. JAMES CURRIE.

MINTO, September 4, 1802.

. . . I write you now from Minto. His lordship, desirous that I should enjoy "otium cum dignitate," wishes me to spend the summer at this country retirement, and begin a poetical work of some importance. There was much kindness in this plan for my happiness and improvement; but many circumstances induced me to prefer Edinburgh for a residence. I have therefore only come for a visit of ten or twelve days.

Lord Minto's company is uniformly agreeable; he is the least moody man I ever saw, and his conversation, when you get him by himself (though he affects neither wit nor learning), is replete with sincere enthusiasm and abundance of original information. Few have carried off so much knowledge, even from so

wide a field as his experience has afforded. But still this is a lord's house—although *his*. His time is so much employed with strangers—fashionable, proud folks,—who have a slang of conversation among themselves as unintelligible to plain, sober beings as the cant of the gypsies, and probably not so amusing, if one did understand it. A man of my lowly breeding feels in their company a little of what Burke calls proud humility, or rather humble contempt; for I declare I have not heard a sentence of either good sense or amusing nonsense from any of our guests, except from Lady Malmesbury, who is a shrewd and liberal-minded woman: she is, like you, a very hearty despiser of the —s.

Lord Minto's unaffected behavior is a striking contrast to those about him. He has all the kindness and sympathies of refined and middling life. This is certainly not the predominant character in aristocracy. It has often astonished me to see what a cold, repulsive atmosphere that little thing called *quality* can spread around itself, and make us believe that it exists at least as a negative quality—like that of cold. But, like all other little passions, this

*hauteur* is very cowardly,—a little indifference on the side of the vulgar makes those minions of fashion open their eyes, half-shut with affectation of pur-blindness, and look, at least, more respectfully. As to conversation, with the generality of them, it is not worth courting ; for their minds are not filled, but dilated. And the human mind, at a certain elevation of rank, grows more barren than the summit of the Alps or Apennines. . . .

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JOHN KEATS TO HIS BROTHERS.

HAMPSTEAD, December 22, 1817.

. . . I dined with Haydon the Sunday after you left, and had a very pleasant day. I dined too (for I have been out too much lately) with Horace Smith, and met his two brothers, with Hill and Kingston, and one DuBois. They only served to convince me how superior humor is to wit, in respect to enjoyment. These men say things which make one start, without making one feel ; they are all alike ; their manners are alike ; they all know fashionables ; they have all a mannerism in their very eating and drinking, in their mere handling a decanter. They talked of Kean and his low company. “Would I were with that company instead of yours ! ”

said I to myself. I know such like acquaintance will never do for me, and yet I am going to Reynolds on Wednesday. . . .

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THOMAS CARLYLE TO JANE BAILLIE WELSH.

KINKAIRD HOUSE,\* September (?), 1823.

. . . I see something of fashionable people here, and truly to my plebeian conception there is not a more futile class of persons on the face of the earth. If I were doomed to exist as a man of fashion, I do honestly believe I should swallow ratsbane, or apply to hemp or steel before three months were over. From day to day and year to year the problem is, not how to use time, but how to waste it least painfully. They have their dinners and their routs. They move heaven and earth to get every thing arranged and enacted properly; and when the whole is done, what is it? Had the parties all wrapped themselves in warm blankets and kept their beds, much peace had been among several hundreds of his Majesty's subjects, and the same result, the uneasy destruction of half a dozen hours, had been quite as well attained.

\* Near Dunkeld, Scotland. Carlyle was at this time a tutor in the family of Mr. Charles Buller.

No wonder poor women take to opium and scandal. The wonder is rather that these queens of the land do not some morning, struck by the hopelessness of their condition, make a general finish by simultaneous consent, and exhibit to coroners and juries the spectacle of the whole world of *ton* suspended by their garters, and freed at last from *ennui* in the most cheap and complete of all possible modes. There is something in the life of a sturdy peasant toiling from sun to sun for a plump wife and six eating children ; but as for the Lady Jerseys and the Lord Petershams, peace be with them.

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FRANCIS JEFFREY TO MRS. COLDEN.

MARDOCKS, May 6, 1822.

. . . Have you any idea what sort of thing a truly elegant English woman of fashion is? I suspect not; for it is not to be seen almost out of England, and I do not know very well how to describe it. Great quietness, simplicity, and delicacy of manners, with a certain dignity and self-possession that puts vulgarity out of countenance, and keeps presumption in awe; a singularly sweet, soft, and rather low voice, with remarkable elegance and ease of

diction; a perfect taste in wit and manners and conversation, but no loquacity, and rather languid spirits; a sort of indolent disdain of display and accomplishments; an air of great good-nature and kindness, with but too often some heartlessness, duplicity, and ambition. These are some of the traits; and such, I think, as would most strike an American. You would think her rather cold and spiritless, but she would predominate over you in the long run; and indeed is a very bewitching and dangerous creature, more seductive and graceful than any other in the world, but not better nor happier; and I am speaking even of the very best and most perfect. We have plenty of loud, foolish things, good humored, even in the highest society. . . .

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MRS. SARA COLERIDGE TO EDWARD QUILLINAN.

LONDON, 1849.

Did you ever meet Miss R—— in London? She is perhaps the most brilliant woman of the day,—the most accomplished and Crichtonian. She draws, takes portraits like an artist, and writes cleverly on painting; she plays with power, and writes most strikingly on music; she speaks different languages. Her essays

and tales have both had great success, the former as great as possible. To put the *comble* to all this, she is a very fine woman, large yet girlish, like a Doric pillar metamorphosed into a damsel, dark and striking. No, this is *not* the *comble*: the top of her perfection is that she has well-bred, courteous, unassuming manners, does not take upon herself and hold forth to the company—a fault of which many lionesses of the day are guilty. At this moment no less than *four* rise up before me, who show a desire to talk to the room at large, rather than quietly to their neighbor on the sofa. Miss R—is honorably distinguished in this respect. She is thoroughly feminine, like that princess of novelists, Jane Austen.

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MRS. ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD TO MRS. BEECROFT.

STOKE NEWINGTON, November 14, 1818.

Our tourists are mostly now returned. Such numbers have resided more or less abroad that I cannot help thinking the intercourse must influence in some degree the national manners, which I find by Madame de Staël are not yet to the taste of our neighbors. They allow us to be respectable, but they plainly intimate

they do not think us amiable. When I read such censures, I cannot help saying in my mind to the author,—I wish you knew such a one and such a one, of my acquaintance ; I am sure you could not but love them. Yet, after all, I fear we must acknowledge something about us dry, cold, reserved ; more afraid of censure than gratified by notice ; very capable of steadiness in important pursuits, but not happy in filling up the pauses and intervals of life with ingenious trifles and spontaneous, social hilarity. . . .

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LORD BYRON TO LORD BLESSINGTON.

GENOA, April 5, 1823.

How is your gout ? or rather, how are you ? I return the Count D'Orsay's journal, which is a very extraordinary production, and of a most melancholy truth in all that regards high life in England. I know, or knew, personally, most of the personages and societies which he describes ; and after reading his remarks, have the sensation fresh upon me as if I had seen them yesterday. I would, however, plead in behalf of some few exceptions, which I will mention by-and-by. The most singular thing is, *how* he should have penetrated *not* the *fact*, but the

mystery of the English *ennui*, at two-and-twenty. I was about the same age when I made the same discovery, in almost precisely the same circles, (for there is scarcely a person mentioned whom I did not see nightly or daily, and was acquainted more or less intimately with most of them),—but I never could have described it so well. *Il faut être Français*, to effect this.

But he ought also to have been in the country during the hunting season, with a “select party of distinguished guests,” as the papers term it. He ought to have seen the gentlemen after dinner (on the hunting days), and the soirée ensuing thereupon,—and the women looking as if they had hunted, or rather been hunted; and I could have wished that he had been at a dinner in town, which I recollect at Lord Cowper’s—small, but select, and composed of the most amusing people. The dessert was hardly on the table when, out of twelve, I counted *five asleep*; of that five there were *Tierney*, Lord —, and Lord Darnley—I forget the other two, but they were either wits or orators, perhaps poets. . . .

Altogether, your friend’s Journal is a very

formidable production. Alas! our dearly beloved countrymen have only discovered that they are tired, and not that they are tiresome; and I suspect that the communication of the latter unpleasant verity will not be better received than truths usually are. I have read the whole with great attention and instruction. I am too good a patriot to say *pleasure*—at least I won't say so, whatever I may think. . . .

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LADY SYDNEY OWENSON MORGAN TO SIR CHARLES MORGAN.

DUBLIN, December 11, 1811.

. . . I have seen the best and the worst of English society; I have dined at the table of a *city trader*, taken tea with the family of a *London merchant*, and supped at Devonshire House, all in one day, and I must say that if there is a people upon earth that understands the *science* of conversation LESS than another, it is the English. The quickness, the variety, the rapidity of perception and impression, which is indispensable to render conversation delightful, is *constitutionally denied* to them; like all people of slowly operating mental faculties, and of business pursuits, they depend upon *memory* more than upon *spontaneous thought*.

When the power of, and *time* for, cultivating that retentive faculty is denied, they are then *hebete* and tiresome, and when it is granted (as among the higher circles), the omnipotence of the *ton* is so great that every one fears to risk himself. In Ireland it is quite different; our *physique*, which renders us ardent, restless, and fond of change, bids defiance to the cultivation of memory; and, therefore, though we produce men of genius, we never have boasted of any man of learning—and so we excel in conversation, because, of necessity we are obliged to do the honors of the *amour-propre* of others; we are obliged to *give* and *take*, for thrown upon excitement, we only respond in proportion to the quantity of stimulus received. In England, conversation is a game of chess—the result of judgment, memory, and deliberation; with us, it is a game of battledore, and our ideas, like our shuttlecocks, are thrown lightly *one* to the *other*, bounding and rebounding, played more for amusement than conquest, and leaving the players equally animated by the game and careless of its results.

There is a term in England applied to persons popular in society, which illustrates what

I have said; it is "*he* (or *she*) *is very amusing*," that is, they tell stories of a *ghost*, or an *actor*. They recite *verses*, or they play *tricks*, all of which must exclude conversation, and it is, in my opinion, the very *bane* of good society. An Englishman will *declaim*, or he will *narrate*, or he will *be silent*; but it is very difficult to get him to converse, especially if he is *suprême bon ton*, or labors under the reputation of being a *rising man*; but even all this, dull as it is, is better than a man who, struck by some fatal analogy in what he is saying, immediately chimes in with the eternal "*that puts me in mind*," and then gives you, not an anecdote, but an absolute history of something his uncle did, or his grandfather said, and then, by some lucky association, goes on with stories which have his own obscure friends for his heroes or heroines, but have neither point, *but*, humor, nor even *moral* (usually tagged to the end of old ballads). Oh, save me from this, good heaven, and I will sustain all else beside!

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MRS. HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI TO SIR JAMES FELLOWES.

BATH, October 15, 1818.

. . . The British Museum is the thing worth seeing in London, and I missed it. English

people make every curiosity so difficult of access, that you may live among them half a century, and see nothing. Foreigners throw the doors open, and take no present going in or out. Our fees at palaces, and our card money under the candlestick are certainly a reminder of old ill-manners ; nor can I reconcile to myself, or to my notions about good breeding, the trick of prescribing to our visitants the stake they shall play for in our house. I feel as well disposed to say what cap they should wear, or what ribands they should buy. Let them buy and wear what they will. . . .

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**MRS. CAROLINE NORTON TO ABRAHAM HAYWARD.**

COWES, July 23, 1841.

I was sorry not to see you yesterday, having (at the risk of the remainder of my reputation here) desired the boatman to row me to the steamers each time they came in, and each time frankly replying to his question : “ Is it a gentleman friend as you expects, marm ? ” “ Yes, Clarke.” Indeed, but for my boatman I should find Cowes dull ; but he is a treasure. The mixture of wheedling and frankness, of shrewdness and simplicity, of great and real kindness

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to those they believe poor, with a very great approximation to swindling by monstrous over-charge to those they think rich, forms the groundwork of the character of your true boatman ; and if you can cross the breed as in this instance by matching a boatman's daughter with a real sailor, the race produced will be quite inestimable ; adding to the above primary qualities utter fearlessness of danger, great merriment and humor, and a peculiar readiness of apprehension worth all the intellect and genius in the world ; besides a charm of manner quite distinct from taught rules of politeness, and yet as good, if not better. The fact is, in our " Island home " your boatman is the only parallel to the *peasant* of other countries. Farmers want to be gentlemen (and often are, in every sense of the word), tradesmen want to be rakes and lords, and tread on the heels of the faults, manners, and habits, etc., of the upper classes. Ploughmen are sulky and stupid machines (in general) ; cottagers shy (and often dispirited and distant neighbors) ; your boatman is the only fraction of the English masses who *at once* acknowledges the enormous gulf of distance between his social

position and yours, and asserts with cheerful independence his right of brotherhood in spite of that distance. You may make him *duller* by not meeting him half-way, but you can't make him less familiar ; you may make him happier and gayer by conversing merrily with him, but you won't bring him a grain nearer insolence. I take that to be the *peasant* character. I am not sure that in the over-educating of the classes who never can have our *leisure*, whatever else they may obtain that is ours, we have not destroyed all our companionship with them ; they stand too near us for our comfort or theirs ; they climb just close enough to our level to prevent their looking up to us ; they elbow us, and we have no longer room to stretch out our hand in fellowship with them ! Pray don't think I am in love with my boatman. (I have run on so rapidly, I have come to a third page, and blush at perceiving it.) He is sixty, and *very* weather-beaten. Give me the benefit of "whatever doubt may arise in your mind." I don't wish to prejudice my jury, but I must say he showed great sympathy in the non-arrival of my "gentleman friend," and took me (by way of comfort) to see a little deserted schooner

that had been towed into port with nothing but a dog and two canaries on board, having been left (supposed sinking) by her crew. It was a common sight to him, but he knew it would be a little treat for me, and did the honors, with a Devonshire House urbanity, of its broken sides, torn sails, and disordered rigging. . . .

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CAPTAIN FREDERICK MARRYAT TO MRS. S—

LANGHAM, September 28, 1845.

I have to thank you on my bended knees for a basket of grouse, which arrived in good order and were very acceptable. My honored mother was, however, gone before their arrival—that was her fault. The grouse, by-the-by, remind me of the black-cock that you sent me last year. I gave one to a large farmer, a neighbor of mine, who had been very civil, and he was so astonished at it that he took it the following day to Fakenham market, to show to the rest of his fraternity, and there was as much admiration and astonishment at it as if it had been a mermaid or the king of the Cannibal Islands. You see we are very primitive down here. Harvest was finished last night—all got in well, and in good condition. To-morrow the men

have the harvest-home dinner, and the next day they put apart to get drunk ; such being the invariable custom of the county. It certainly does appear that we English will always have some excuse to get fuddled when we can. I proposed, last year, that they should get drunk on the day of the harvest dinner, but they scouted the idea ; they would have a day for intoxication entirely—such was the custom. It was true that they would lose a day's wages, but they must do as their forefathers had always done before them. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO GEORGE MONTAGU.

ARLINGTON STREET, December 20, 1762.

. . . On Thursday I was summoned to Princess Emily's *loo*. *Loo*, she called it, *politics* it was. The second thing she said to me was, " How were you the two long days ? " " Madam, I was only there the first." " And how did you vote ? " " Madam, I went away." " Upon my word, that was carving well." Not a very pleasant apostrophe to one who certainly never was a time-server ! Well, we sat down. She said : " I hear Wilkinson is turned out, and that Sir Edward Winnington is to have his place ; who

is he?" addressing herself to me, who sat over against her. "He is the late Mr. Winnington's heir, madam." She shrugged up her shoulders, and continued: "Winnington originally was a great Tory; what do you think he was when he died?" "Madam, I believe what all people are in place." Pray, Mr. Montagu, do you perceive any thing rude or offensive in this? Hear then: she flew into the most outrageous passion, colored like scarlet, and said: "None of your wit; I don't understand joking on those subjects; what do you think your father would have said if he had heard you say so? He would have murdered you, and you would have deserved it." I was quite confounded and amazed; it was impossible to explain myself across a loo-table, as she is so deaf: there was no making a reply to a woman and a princess, and particularly for me, who have made it a rule, when I must converse with royalties, to treat them with the greatest respect, since it is all the court they will ever have from me. I said to those on each side of me, "What can I do? I cannot explain myself now." Well, I held my peace, and so did she for a quarter of an hour. Then she began with me again,

examined me on the whole debate, and at last asked me directly, which I thought the best speaker, my father or Mr. Pitt. If possible, this was more distressing than her anger. I replied, it was impossible to compare two men so different: that I believed my father was more a man of business than Mr. Pitt. "Well, but Mr. Pitt's language?" "Madam," said I, "I have always been remarkable for admiring Mr. Pitt's language." At last, this unpleasant scene ended; but as we were going away, I went close to her, and said: "Madam, I must beg leave to explain myself; your Royal Highness has seemed to be very angry with me, and I am sure I did not mean to offend you; all I intended to say was, that I supposed Tories were Whigs when they got places." "Oh!" said she, "I am so very much obliged to you; indeed, I was very angry." Why she was angry, or what she thought I meant, I do not know to this moment, unless she supposed that I would have hinted that the Duke of Newcastle and the opposition were not men of consummate virtue, and had lost their place out of principle. The very reverse was at that time in my head; for I meant that the Tories would

be just as loyal as the Whigs, when they got any thing by it. . . .

MRS. ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD TO HER BROTHER,  
DR. AIKEN.

PALGRAVE, May, 1784.

. . . What do you think of the behavior of our great ladies on the present election? I thought the newspapers had exaggerated: but Mr. —— says he himself saw the two Lady —— and Miss —— go into a low alehouse and canvass, where they staid half an hour; and then, with the mob at their heels offering them a thousand indignities, proceeded to another. These he mentioned as unmarried ladies, and therefore less privileged. The Duchess of ——, Mrs. ——, and many others, equally expose their charms for the good of the public. . . .

MRS. RICHARD TRENCH TO HER HUSBAND.

PARIS, April, 1804.

. . . It would have been a stiff holding back not to have called on Lady —— after what *he* had said. I told you she was *icily civil*; but I am always amused by hearing Mrs. F., to whom she was *icily rude*, say what a charming creature she has been to *her*, how fond they are of one another, and how much better she loves

Lady — than any other creature in the world, etc., etc. There certainly is this convenience in rank,—that it seems to save the trouble of being civil to nine tenths of those who have none, and who think if a titled person does not turn them out of the room they are remarkably kind. . . .

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MRS. RICHARD TRENCH TO HER SON.

LONDON, November 11, 1823.

. . . A lady spoke the other day of the impossibility of knowing her own sex till she saw them in the company of men, and cited one whom she thought all gentleness, propriety, and delicacy, during some days passed in a country house, till at last a man came to nail down the carpets. *A man*, like Ithuriel's spear, makes some women start up in their own shape, and so it was here. She immediately displayed forwardness, affectation, and coquetry in all their varying forms. How often are we reminded of this story. . . .

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THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO MISS HANNAH MORE MACAULAY.

LONDON, May 30, 1831.

Well, my dear, I have been to Holland House. I took a glass coach, and arrived,

through a fine avenue of elms, at the great entrance towards seven o'clock. . . .

In the drawing-room I had a long talk with Lady Holland about the antiquities of the house and about the purity of the English language, wherein she thinks herself a critic. I happened, in speaking about the Reform Bill, to say that I wished that it had been possible to form a few commercial constituencies, if the word constituency were admissible. "I am glad you put that in," said her Ladyship. "I was just going to give it you. It is an odious word. Then there is *talented*, *influential*, and *gentlemanly*. I never could break Sheridan of *gentlemanly*, though he allowed it to be wrong." . . .

She is certainly a woman of considerable talents and great literary acquirements. To me she was excessively gracious; yet there is a haughtiness in her courtesy which, even after all that I had heard of her, surprised me. The centurion did not keep his soldiers in better order than she keeps her guests. It is to one "Go," and he goeth; and to another "Do this," and it is done. "Ring the bell, Mr. Macaulay." "Lay down that screen, Lord Russell; you will spoil it." "Mr. Allen, take a

candle and show Mr. Cradock the picture of Buonaparte." Lord Holland is, on the other hand, all kindness, simplicity, and vivacity. He talked very well both on politics and on literature. He asked me in a very friendly manner about my father's health, and begged to be remembered to him. . . .

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THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY TO MISS HANNAH  
MORE MACAULAY.

LONDON, November, 1833.

. . . I have been racketing lately, having dined twice with Rogers, and once with Grant. Lady Holland is in a most extraordinary state. She came to Rogers, with Allen, in so bad a humor that we were all forced to rally and make common cause against her. There was not a person at table to whom she was not rude; and none of us were inclined to submit. Rogers sneered; Sydney made merciless sport of her; Tom Moore looked excessively impertinent; Bobus put her down with simple straightforward rudeness; and I treated her with what I meant to be the coldest civility. Allen flew into a rage with us all, and especially with Sydney, whose guffaws, as the Scotch say, were indeed tremendous. . . .

Her Ladyship has been better for this discipline. She has overwhelmed me ever since with attentions and invitations. . . .

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ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY TO HIS MOTHER.

OXFORD, November 29, 7½ P.M., 1833.

I will begin my letter in the midst of my agony of expectation and fear. I finished my examination to-day at two o'clock. At eight to-night the decision takes place, so that my next three quarters of an hour will be dreadful. As I do not know how the other schools have done, my hope of success can depend upon nothing, except that I think I have done pretty well, better, perhaps, from comparing notes, than the rest of the Rugby men. Oh, the joy if I do get it! and the disappointment if I do not. And from two of us trying at once, I fear the blow to the school would be dreadful if none of us get it. We had to work the second day as hard as on the first, on the third and fourth not so hard, nor to-day—Horace to turn into English verse, which was good for me; a divinity and a mathematical paper, in which I hope my copiousness in the first made up for my scantiness in the second. Last night I dined

at Magdalen, which is enough of itself to turn one's head upside down, so very magnificent. . . . I will go on now. We all assembled in the hall, and had to wait an hour, the room getting fuller and fuller with Rugby Oxonians crowding in to hear the result. Every time the door opened my heart jumped, but many times it was nothing. At last the dean appeared in his white robes, and moved up to the head of the table. He began a long preamble—that they were well satisfied with all, and that those who were disappointed were many in comparison with those who were successful, etc. All this time every one was listening with the most intense eagerness, and I almost bit my lips off till—The successful candidates are—Mr. Stanley—I gave a great jump, and there was a half shout amongst the Rugby men. The next was Lonsdale from Eton. The dean then took me into the chapel where the Master and all the Fellows were, and there I swore that I would not reveal the secrets, disobey the statutes, or dissipate the wealth of the college. I was then made to kneel on the steps, and admitted to the rank of Scholar and Exhibitioner of Balliol College, *nomine, Patris, Filii, et Spiritus.* I

then wrote my name, and it was finished. We start to-day in a chaise and *four* for the glory of it. You may think of my joy, the honor of Rugby is saved, and I am a Scholar of Balliol!

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FRANCIS JEFFREY TO HIS SISTER.

OXFORD, October 25, 1791.

. . . Did I tell you the manner of our living here? We occupy, each of us, our separate apartments, and lock ourselves in at night. At seven o'clock we repair to prayers, and it would astonish you to witness the activity with which I spring up at that hour, after which most of us choose to walk till nine o'clock, at which hour a George (that is to say, a round penny roll) is served up, with a bit of butter, upon a pewter plate, into each of our chambers, where we provide our own tea and sugar. We do not often breakfast alone, but generally order our George up to some friend's apartment, and breakfast sociably. From this time to three we do what we please, unless there be any lectures to attend; but at three, the trumpet's martial voice proclaims the hour of dinner, to which we all repair in the Common Hall, after having ordered, in our way through the kitchen,

whatever part of the bill of fare we may choose. Allow me to satisfy your curiosity by informing you that we have a clean table-cloth every day. After dinner, we either return each to his own apartment, or, what is more common, two or three together, who generally drink or laugh till the hour of five warns the bellman to call us again to prayers. Very few of us take any tea—I have never yet. Our supper is served the same way as breakfast. I have usually chosen to sup alone, and have not yet been out of my bed beyond eleven. Our practice upon the road has been of some service in preparing me for those hours of sleeping and waking. You have now some idea how I live. Stupidly enough, is it not? I would willingly change it. This would be tedious to any other body; but, judging of your feelings by my own (and I hope you think that a compliment, as I meant it), I am convinced you will read it with satisfaction. . . .

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ROBERT SOUTHEY TO HIS DAUGHTERS.

STREATHAM, June 26, 1820.

Bertha, Kate, and Isabel, you have been very good girls, and have written me very nice letters, with which I was much pleased. This is

the last letter which I can write in return ; and as I happen to have a quiet hour to myself, here at Streatham, on Monday noon, I will employ that hour in relating to you the whole history and manner of my being ell-ell-deed at Oxford by the vice-chancellor. . . .

When the theatre is full, the vice-chancellor, and the heads of houses, and the doctors enter. Those persons who are to be ell-ell-deed remain without in the divinity schools, in their robes, till the convocation have signified their assent to the ell-ell-deeing, and then they are led into the theatre, one after another, in a line, into the middle of the area, the people just making a lane for them. The professor of civil law, Dr. Phillimore, went before, and made a long speech in Latin, telling the vice-chancellor and the dignissimi doctores what excellent persons we were who were now to be ell-ell-deed. Then he took us one by one by the hand, and presented each in his turn, pronouncing his name aloud, saying who and what he was, and calling him many laudatory names ending in issimus. The audience then cheered loudly to show their approbation of the person ; the vice-chancellor stood up, and repeating the first words in issime,

ell-ell-deed him ; the beadles lifted up the bar of separation, and the new-made doctor went up the steps and took his seat among the dignissimi doctores.

O Bertha, Kate, and Isabel, if you had seen me that day ! I was like other issimis, dressed in a great robe of the finest scarlet cloth, with sleeves of rose-colored silk, and I had in my hand a black velvet cap like a beef-eater, for the use of which dress I paid one guinea for that day. Dr. Phillimore, who was an old school-fellow of mine, and a very good man, took me by the hand in my turn, and presented me, upon which there was a great clapping of hands and huzzaing at my name. When that was over, the vice-chancellor stood up, and said these words, whereby I was ell-ell-deed : “ Doc-tissime et ornatissime vir, ego, pro auctoritate mea et totius universitatis hujus, admitto te ad gradum doctoris in jure civile, honoris causa.” These were the words which ell-ell-deed me ; and then the bar was lifted up, and I seated myself among the doctors.

Little girls, you know it might be proper for me, now, to wear a large wig, and to be called Dr. Southey, and to become very severe, and

leave off being a comical papa. And if you should find that ell-ell-deeing has made this difference in me, you will not be surprised. However, I shall not come down in a wig, neither shall I wear my robes at home.

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JOHN CAMPBELL (*afterwards Lord-Chancellor*) TO HIS BROTHER.

TEMPLE, March 16, 1808.

I returned last night from Maidstone, and expected I might have found a letter from you on my table; but there are as yet no arrivals from Bengal. I wanted sadly something to recruit my spirits, for I came to town quite *flétri*. No brief, no prospect, no possibility, of ever having a brief on the circuit. If I had all the learning and all the accomplishments which I could wish to have, what would it signify? I am quite tired of the circuit, and hate the idea of ever joining it again. Apart from business there is little enjoyment to be derived from it. The men in themselves have amiable qualities and elegant acquirements, but there is no room for these to appear from the occupation and manner of life which prevail. All is bustle, confusion, and card-playing. There are two, and only two, ways of acquiring distinction amongst

us,—*business* and *whist*. I have no business; I do not play at whist. Consequently I am the most insignificant creature belonging to the circuit. No one dislikes or abuses me, because it is not known that I am present. It is a literal fact that about six weeks ago Garrow asked me if I had yet fixed upon my circuit! At Maidstone I have not even been able to pick up a point of law for my second number. My disbursements, about seven guineas. Among other pieces of good fortune I was obliged to take half a chaise both going and coming. I travelled with Mr. Roberts, one of the most respectable men on the circuit. I could easily have gone in a post-chaise with two scamps, but I would rather have hired a chariot and six for myself.

I don't know whether I ever attempted to convey to you any notion of our proceedings. We never go beyond a day's journey from London. The first day of the assizes at any place we travel down; some arriving before dinner, and the others in the evening. A few ride on horseback or drive gigs, but the far greater number go in post-chaises. We must all live in lodgings, it being forbidden to sleep at the

inns, on account of the attorneys being there ; but at one inn in each town we all mess. The first night there is a general supper, to which every barrister at the assizes must contribute. We dine together next day, but none pay except those that are present ; at least, absentees who give notice previously that they shall not attend, by the existing regulation are excused, although it was formerly otherwise. The leader of the circuit (Mr. Serjeant Shepherd) sits at the head af the table, and Mr. Junior at the bottom of it. This is the youngest barrister present, who has to fill a very arduous and disagreeable office. He orders the dinner, settles the bill, and next day (or when he can) duns every individual for his reckoning. But his principle duty is to take care of the wine. We have a stock at each place, and the *junior* is bound to see a proper quantity brought from the cellar, and to guard it from the depredation of the waiters. We sit down to table about five and rise at seven. The men of business then retire to their briefs and their consultations, and cards are called for by the men of pleasure. A poor stupid wretch like myself is obliged to sit in the room doing nothing, or to walk into

the fields, there to gaze at the stars and ponder his melancholy fate. I find it impossible to go home to my lodgings to read. My thoughts are dissipated by the bustle of the day, and I grow more and more melancholy as I have leisure for reflection.

The next day we dine with the judges (at least at three places on the circuit). This is a very formidable, uncomfortable, disagreeable meeting. The two judges sit at the head of the table, cheek by jowl. The barristers range themselves according to seniority. The reverend sages of the law unbend a good deal on these occasions, and come out with their old stories, so that the circle round them is generally pretty cheerful, but dulness pervades all the rest of the table. The dinner is always good and the wine execrable. At last "Prosperity to the Home Circuit" comes to our relief. This toast is the signal for departure.

In the course of the following day we generally get back to town. None stay after that unless they are detained by business, for the briefs are all delivered and the chances gone. On the first day of business we go into court about twelve o'clock (the judges previously at-

tending divine service), and afterwards at eight in the morning. The civil and criminal courts sit at the same time, and men go from one to the other as business or inclination leads them. I now generally stick to the civil courts for the sake of my Reports. . . .

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MRS. BOSCAWEN TO MRS. DELANY.

(?) 1770.

. . . The *female club* I told you of is removed from their quarters, Lady Pembroke (one of its members) objecting to a tavern; it meets therefore, at present, at certain rooms of Almack's, who for another year is to provide a private house. It is much the subject of conversation I believe, and the other night I heard many particulars relating to it. The first fourteen who imagined and planned it settled its rules and *constitutions*: these were formed upon the model of one of the clubs at Almack's. There are seventy-five chosen (the whole number is to be two hundred). The ladies nominate and *choose* the gentlemen, and *vice versa*; so that no lady can exclude a lady, or gentleman a gentleman! The Duchess of Bedford was at first black-balled, but is since admitted. Duchess

of Marlborough and of Grafton are also chosen. Lady Hertford wrote to beg admittance and has obtained it; also Lady Holderness, Lady Rochford, and Lady Harrington are black-balled, as is Lord March, Mr. Boothby, and one or two more who think themselves pretty gentlemen *du premier ordre*, but it is plain the ladies are not of their opinion. Lady Molyneux has accepted, but the Duchess of Beaufort has declined, "*as her health never permits her to sup abroad.*" When any of the ladies dine with the society they are to send word before, but supper comes of course and is to be served always at eleven. Play will be *deep* and *constant* probably. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO GEN. HENRY SEYMOUR CONWAY.

ARLINGTON STREET, January 15, 1775.

. . . You must know that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle-tree, a weeping-willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been new-christened Helicon. Ten years ago there lived a Madam Riggs, an old rough humorist who passed for a wit; her daughter, who passed for nothing, married a Captain Miller, full of good-

natured officiousness. These good folks were friends of Miss Rich, who carried me to dine with them at Batheaston, now Pindus. They caught a little of what was called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan were forced to go abroad to retrieve. Alas! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth Muse, as romantic as Mademoiselle Scuderi, and as sophisticated as Mrs. Vesey. The captain's fingers are loaded with cameos, his tongue runs over with *virtù*, and that both may contribute to the improvement of their own country, they have introduced *bouts-rimés* as a new discovery. They hold a Parnassus-fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase dressed with pink ribands and myrtles, receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest compositions, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope Miller, kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle, with—I don't know what. You may think this is fiction, or exaggeration. Be dumb, unbelievers! The collection is

printed, published. Yes, on my faith, there are *bouts-rimes* on a buttered muffin, made by her grace, the Duchess of Northumberland; receipts to make them by Corydon the venerable, alias George Pitt; others very pretty, by Lord Palmerston; some by Lord Carlisle; many by Mrs. Miller herself, that have no fault but wanting metre; and immortality promised to her without end or measure. In short, since folly, which never ripens to madness but in this hot climate, ran distracted, there was never any thing so entertaining or so dull—for you cannot read so long as I have been telling. . . .

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MISS. HANNAH MORE TO HER SISTER.

LONDON, May 22, 1788.

I have been pleasantly engaged for a week past, during this fine weather, in going almost every day to some pleasant villa of different friends. Tuesday I dined at Strawberry Hill,—a pleasant day, and a good little party. The next day we went to a sweet place which Mr. Montagu has bought on Shooter's Hill. Another day I went to Richmond with Mrs. Boscawen, and came home in the evening to a *the* at Mrs. Montagu's. Perhaps you do not know

that a *thé* is among the stupid new follies of the winter. You are to invite fifty or a hundred people to come at eight o'clock: there is to be a long table, or little parties at small ones; the cloth is to be laid as at breakfast; the table is covered with rolls, wafers, bread and butter; and, what constitutes the very essence of a *thé*, an immense load of hot buttered rolls and muffins, all admirably contrived to create a nausea in persons fresh from the dinner-table. Now, of all nations under the sun as I take it, the English are the greatest fools:—because the Duke of Dorset in Paris, where people dine at two, thought this would be a pretty fashion to introduce, we who dine at six must adopt this French translation of an English fashion, and fall into it as if it were an original invention; taking up our own custom at third hand. This will be a short folly. . . .

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MRS. ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD TO MRS. CARR.

HAMPSTEAD, October, 1801.

. . . I have seen Dr. Beddoes, who is a very pleasant man; his favorite prescription at present to ladies is, the inhaling the breath of cows; and as he does not, like the German doctors, send the ladies to the cow-house, the cows are

to be brought into the lady's chamber, where they are to stand all night with their heads within the curtains. Mrs. ——, who has a good deal of humor, says the benefit cannot be mutual; and she is afraid, if the fashion takes, we shall eat diseased beef. It is fact, however, that a family have been turned out of their lodgings, because the people of the house would not admit the cows: they said they had not built and furnished their rooms for the hoofs of cattle.

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CHARLES SKINNER MATTHEWS TO MISS —

LONDON, May 22, 1809.

I must begin with giving you a few particulars of the singular place which I have lately quitted.

Newstead Abbey is situated one hundred and thirty-six miles from London; four on this side Mansfield. . . .

The house and gardens are entirely surrounded by a wall with battlements. In front is a large lake, bordered here and there with castellated buildings, the chief of which stands on an eminence at the farther extremity of it. Fancy all this surrounded with bleak and barren hills, with scarce a tree to be seen for miles,

except a solitary clump or two, and you will have some idea of Newstead. . . .

So much for the place, concerning which I have thrown together these few particulars, meaning my account to be, like the place itself, without any order or connection. But if the place itself appear rather strange to you, the ways of the inhabitants will not appear much less so. Ascend, then, with me the hall steps, that I may introduce you to my Lord and his visitants. But have a care how you proceed ; be mindful to go there in broad daylight, and with your eyes about you. For, should you make any blunder,—should you go to the right of the hall steps, you are laid hold of by a bear ; and, should you go to the left, your case is still worse, for you run full against a wolf !—Nor, when you have attained the door, is your danger over ; for the hall being decayed, and therefore standing in need of repair, a bevy of inmates are very probably hanging at one end of it with their pistols ; so that if you enter without giving loud notice of your approach, you have only escaped the wolf and the bear to expire by the pistol-shots of the merry monks of Newstead.

Our party consisted of Lord Byron and four others; and was, now and then, increased by the presence of a neighboring parson. As for our way of living, the order of the day was generally this: For breakfast we had no set hour, but each suited his own convenience,—every thing remaining on the table till the whole party had done; though had one wished to breakfast at the early hour of ten, one would have been rather lucky to find any of the servants up. Our average hour of rising was one. I, who generally got up between eleven and twelve, was always—even when an invalid—the first of the party, and was esteemed a prodigy of early rising. It was frequently past two before the breakfast party broke up. Then, for the amusements of the morning, there was reading, fencing, single-stick, or shuttlecock, in the great room; practising with pistols in the hall; walking—riding—cricket—sailing on the lake, playing with the bear, or teasing the wolf. Between seven and eight we dined, and our evening lasted from that time till one, two, or three in the morning. The evening diversions may be easily conceived.

I must not omit the custom of handing

round, after dinner, on the removal of the cloth, a human skull filled with Burgundy. After revelling on choice viands and the finest wines of France, we adjourned to tea, where we amused ourselves with reading or improving conversation,—each according to his fancy,—and, after sandwiches, etc., retired to rest. A set of monkish dresses, which had been provided, with all the proper apparatus of crosses, beads, tonsures, etc. often gave a variety to our appearance and to our pursuits. . . .

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BERNARD BARTON TO MRS. SUTTON.

WOODBRIDGE, September 12, 1846.

And now, my dear old friend of above twenty years' standing, I have two points on which I must try to right myself in thy good opinion—the swansdown waistcoat, and the bell, with the somewhat unquakerly inscription of “Mr. Barton's bell” graven above the handle thereof. I could not well suppress a smile at both counts of the indictment, for both are true to a certain extent, though I do not know that I should feel at all bound to plead guilty to either in a criminal one. It is true that prior to my birthday, now nearly two years ago, my daughter, with-

out consulting me, did work for me, in worsted work, as they do nowadays for slippers, a piece of sempstress-ship or needle-craft, forming the forepart of a waistcoat; the pattern of which, being rather larger than I should have chosen, had choice been allowed me, gave it some semblance of the striped or flowered waistcoats which, for aught I know, may be designated as swansdown; but the colors, drab and chocolate, were so very sober that I put it on as I found it, thinking no evil, and wore it, first and week-days, all last winter, and may probably through the coming one, at least on week-days. It is cut in my wonted single-breasted fashion; and as my collarless coat, coming pretty forward, allows no great display of it, I had not heard before a word of scandal, or even censure, on its unfriendliness. Considering who worked it for me, I am not sure, had the royal arms been worked thereon, if in such sober colors, but I might have worn it, and thought it less fine and less fashionable than the velvet and silk ones which I have seen, ere now, in our galleries, and worn by Friends of high standing and undoubted orthodoxy. But I attach comparatively little importance to dress, while there

is enough left in the *tout ensemble* of the costume to give ample evidence that the wearer is a Quaker. So much for the waistcoat; now for the bell: I live in the back part of the Bank premises, and the approach to the yard leading to my habitat is by a gate opening out of the principal street or thoroughfare through our town; the same gate serving for an approach to my cousin's kitchen door, to a large bar-iron warehouse in the same yard, and I know not what beside. Under these circumstances some notification was thought needful to mark the bell appertaining to our domicile, though I suppose nearly a hundred yards off, and the bell-hanger, without any consultation with me, and without my knowledge, had put these words over the handle of the bell, in a recess or hole in the wall by the gate-side, and they had stood there unnoticed and unobserved by me for weeks, if not months, before I ever saw them. When aware of their being there, having had no concern whatever in their being put there, having given no directions for their inscription, and not having to pay for them, I quietly let them stand; and, until thy letter reached me, I have never heard one word of comment on said in-

scription as an unquakerly one, for I believe it is well known among all our neighbors that the job of making two houses out of one was done by contract with artisans not of us, who executed their commission according to usual custom, without taking our phraseology into account. Such, my good friend, are the simple facts of the two cases.

## NATIONAL TRAITS.

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FRANCIS HORNER TO HIS MOTHER.

KILLARNEY, September 15, 1810.

. . . From Dublin we went to Limerick by the mail-coach, through a tame country, level the greater part of the way, all (except where there is bog) under cultivation, and passing (in the county of Tipperary particularly) some wild villages. The cultivation of every thing but potatoes seemed to be sorry, but its extent is so great as to give the idea of an immense produce, even if we did not see the multitudes who crowd the whole country. All that I had heard in description of the numbers of the Irish, and of their dirt, rags, and beggary, seem to me now to have been short of the truth. The streets of Limerick were like a great fair, though it was not even market day, and this from morning to night. It seemed as if every house had poured out its inhabitants; yet every cellar we looked into seemed full. It was more or less the same in all the towns and vil-

laces we came through, and we never went a mile upon the highway without seeing a great many persons. None of them seem to have any thing to do; through all that we call the working hours of the day we saw large lasses, and lads six feet high, lounging round the cabin doors. It is literally true that the only appearance of industry we saw was in the number of schools we observed on this side of Limerick,—schools for the ragged children of those same cabins; and we two or three times passed a little swarm of them sitting on the outside, to all appearance because it was quite full of them within, reading, writing, and ciphering. Murray got into conversation with one of the schoolmasters (in a village where there was not a hovel better than a hog-sty), who was a young man, and who told him that Telemachus was one of the books he read with the children. All this, when one sees the idleness of the people and the backwardness of the country, is a little puzzling. With this idleness and dirt and nakedness, they look a much happier people than I have seen in any part of England or Scotland; the English peasant is a torpid animal compared with the light-hearted people of

this country. They seem forever talking, and in a high tide of spirits; their volubility is somewhat distressing, and their language is more full of submission than is pleasant, because it reminds one how they have been taught it by oppression; but among themselves they seem to have a great deal of merriment and enjoyment. They have all of them a real share of smart drollery and imagery, enough to mark them as entirely a different race of people from those on our side of the Channel. I have seen but very little in the course of these days; but all this I think I have observed distinctly. . . .

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JOHN KEATS TO THOMAS KEATS.

AUCHENCAIRN, July 3, 1818.

. . . On our walk in Ireland, we had too much opportunity to see the worse than nakedness, the rags, the dirt, and misery of the poor common Irish. A Scotch cottage, though in that sometimes the smoke has no exit but at the door, is a palace to an Irish one. We had the pleasure of finding our way through a peat bog, three miles long at least,—dreary, flat, dank, black, and spongy,—here and there were poor dirty creatures, and a few strong men cut-

ting or carting peat. . . . On our return from Belfast we met a sedan—the Duchess of Dunghill. It is no laughing matter though. Imagine the worst dog-kennel you ever saw, placed upon two poles from a mouldy fencing. In such a wretched thing sat a squalid old woman, squat like an ape half-starved from a scarcity of biscuit in its passage from Madagascar to the Cape, with a pipe in her mouth, and looking out with a round-eyed, skinny-lidded inanity, with a sort of horizontal idiotic movement of her head: squat and lean she sat, and puffed out the smoke, while two ragged, tattered girls carried her along. What a thing would be a history of her life and sensations! . . .

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RICHARD HARRIS BARNHAM TO MRS. HUGHES.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, June 7, 1836.

. . . I know you are not over fond of Moore: *I* hate his politics, but he is a very amusing companion.

I must tell you one of his stories, because as Sir Walter Scott is the hero of it I know it will not be unacceptable to you. When George IV. went to Ireland, one of the “pisintry,” delighted with his affability to the crowd on landing,

said to the toll-keeper as the king passed through :

“ Och, now ! and his Majesty, God bless him, never paid the turnpike ! an’ how ’s that ? ”

“ Oh ! kings never does ; we lets ’em go free , ” was the answer.

“ Then there ’s the dirty money for ye , ” says Pat. “ It shall never be said that the king came here, and found nobody to pay the turnpike for him . ”

Moore, on his visit to Abbotsford, told this story to Sir Walter, when they were comparing notes as to the two royal visits.

“ Now, Mr. Moore , ” replied Scott, “ there ye have just the advantage of us . There was no want of enthusiasm here ; the Scotch folks would have done any thing in the world for his Majesty, but—pay the turnpike . ” . . .

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OLIVER GOLDSMITH TO ROBERT BRYANTON.

EDINBURGH, September 26, 1753.

. . . Shall I tire you with a description of this unfruitful country, where I must lead you over their hills all brown with heath, or their valleys scarcely able to feed a rabbit ? Man alone seems to be the only creature who has arrived to the natural size in this poor soil.

Every part of the country presents the same dismal landscape. No grove nor brook lend their music to cheer the stranger, or make the inhabitants forget their poverty. Yet with all these disadvantages, enough to call him down to humility, a Scotchman is one of the proudest things alive. The poor have pride ever ready to relieve them. If mankind should happen to despise them, they are masters of their own admiration, and that they can plentifully bestow upon themselves.

From their pride and poverty, as I take it, results one advantage this country enjoys: namely, the gentlemen here are much better bred than among us. No such character here as our fox-hunter; and they have expressed great surprise when I informed them that some men in Ireland of one thousand pounds a year spend their whole lives in running after a hare, drinking to be drunk, and . . . Truly, if such a being, equipped in his hunting dress, came among a circle of Scotch gentry, they would behold him with the same astonishment that a countryman does King George on horseback.

The men here have generally high cheekbones, and are lean and swarthy, fond of action,

dancing in particular. Now that I have mentioned dancing, let me say something of their balls, which are very frequent here. When a stranger enters the dancing-hall, he sees one end of the room taken up by the ladies, who sit dismally in a group by themselves; in the other end stand their pensive partners that are to be; but no more intercourse between the sexes than there is between two countries at war. The ladies indeed may ogle, and the gentlemen sigh; but an embargo is laid on any closer commerce. At length, to interrupt hostilities, the lady directress, or intendant, or what you will, pitches upon a lady and gentleman to walk a minuet; which they perform with a formality that approaches to despondence. After five or six couples have thus walked the gauntlet, all stand up to country dances, each gentleman furnished with a partner from the aforesaid lady directress; so they dance much, say nothing, and thus concludes our assembly. I told a Scotch gentleman, that such profound silence resembled the ancient procession of the Roman matrons in honor of Ceres; and the Scotch gentleman told me (and, faith, I believe he was right) that I was a very great pedant for my pains. . . .

SAMUEL JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

BAMFF, August 25, 1773.

. . . New Aberdeen is a large town, built almost wholly of that granite which is used for the new pavément in London, which, hard as it is, they square with very little difficulty. Here I first saw the women in plaids. The plaid makes at once a hood and cloak, without cutting or sewing, merely by the manner of drawing the opposite sides over the shoulders. The maids at the inns run over the house barefoot; and children, not dressed in rags, go without shoes or stockings. Shoes are, indeed, not yet in universal use; they came late into this country. One of the professors told us, as we were mentioning a fort built by Cromwell, that the country owed much of its present industry to Cromwell's soldiers. "They taught us," said he, "to raise cabbage and make shoes." How they lived without shoes may yet be seen; but in the passage through villages, it seems to him that surveys their gardens, that when they had not cabbage they had nothing. . . .

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SAMUEL JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

SKIE, September 6, 1773.

I am now looking on the sea from a house of Sir Alexander Macdonald, in the Isle of Skie.

Little did I once think of seeing this region of obscurity, and little did you once expect a salutation from this verge of European life. I have now the pleasure of going where nobody goes, and seeing what nobody sees. Our design is to visit several of the smaller islands, and then pass over to the southwest of Scotland. . . .

A very great proportion of the people are barefoot; shoes are not yet considered as necessities of life. It is still the custom to send out the sons of gentlemen without them into the streets and ways. There are more beggars than I have ever seen in England; they beg, if not silently, yet very modestly. . . .

August 30th we set out with four horses. We had two Highlanders to run by us, who were active, officious, civil, and hardy. Our journey was for many miles along a military way made upon the banks of Lough Ness, a water about eighteen miles long, but not, I think, half a mile broad. Our horses were not bad, and the way was very pleasant; the rock out of which the road was cut was covered with birch-trees, fern, and heath. The lake below was beating its bank by a gentle wind, and the rocks beyond the water on the right stood

sometimes horrid and wild, and sometimes opened into a kind of bay, in which there was a spot of cultivated ground, yellow with corn. In one part of the way we had trees on both sides for perhaps half a mile. Such a length of shade perhaps Scotland cannot show in any other place.

You are not to suppose that here are to be any more towns or inns. We came to a cottage which they call General's Hut, where we alighted to dine, and had eggs, and bacon, and mutton, with wine, rum, and whiskey. I had water. . . .

After tedious travel of some hours we came to what I believe we must call a village—a place where there were three huts built of turf; at one of which we were to have dinner and our bed, for we could not reach any better place that night. This place is called Enoch in Glenmorrison. The house in which we lodged was distinguished by a chimney, the rest had only a hole for the smoke. Here we had eggs, and mutton, and a chicken, and a sausage, and rum. In the afternoon tea was made by a very decent girl in a printed linen; she engaged me so much that I made her a present of Cocker's Arithmetic.

SAMUEL JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

OSTICH IN SKIE, September 30, 1773.

. . . Mr. Thrale probably wonders how I live all this time without sending to him for money. Travelling in Scotland is dear enough—dearer in proportion to what the country affords than in England, but residence in the isles is unexpensive. Company is, I think, considered as a supply of pleasure, and a relief of that tediousness of life which is felt in every place, elegant or rude. Of wine and punch they are very liberal, for they get them cheap; but as there is no custom-house on the island, they can hardly be considered as smugglers. Their punch is made without lemons or any substitute.

Their tables are very plentiful; but a very nice man would not be pampered. As they have no meat but as they kill it, they are obliged to live while it lasts upon the same flesh. They kill a sheep, and set mutton boiled and roast on the table together. They have fish both of the sea and of the brooks; but they can hardly conceive that it requires any sauce. To sauce in general they are strangers; now and then butter is melted, but I dare not always

take lest I should offend by disliking it. Barley-broth is a constant dish, and is made well in every house. A stranger, if he is prudent, will secure his share, for it is not certain that he will be able to eat any thing else.

Their meat being often newly killed, is very tough, and, as nothing is sufficiently subdued by the fire, is not easily to be eaten. Carving is here a very laborious employment, for the knives are never whetted. Table-knives are not of long subsistence in the Highlands; every man, while arms were a regular part of dress, had his knife and fork appendant to his dirk. Knives they now lay upon the table, but the handles are apt to show that they have been in other hands, and the blades have neither brightness nor edge.

Of silver there is no want, and it will last long, for it is never cleaned. They are a nation just rising from barbarity: long contented with necessaries, now somewhat studious of convenience, but not yet arrived at delicate discriminations. Their linen is, however, both clean and fine. Bread, such as we mean by that name, I have never seen in the Isle of Skye. They have ovens, for they bake their pies; but

they never ferment their meal, nor mould a loaf. Cakes of oats and barley are brought to the table, but I believe wheat is reserved for strangers. They are commonly too hard for me, and therefore I take potatoes to my meat, and am sure to find them on almost every table.

They retain so much of the pastoral life, that some preparation of milk is commonly one of the dishes both at dinner and supper. Tea is always drank at the usual times; but in the morning the table is polluted with a plate of slices of strong cheese. This is peculiar to the Highlands; at Edinburgh there are always honey and sweetmeats on the morning tea-table.

Strong liquors they seem to love. Every man, perhaps woman, begins the day with a dram; and the punch is made both at dinner and supper.

They have neither wood nor coal for fuel, but burn peat or turf in their chimneys. It is dug out of the moors or mosses, and makes a strong and lasting fire, not always very sweet, and somewhat apt to smoke the pot.

The houses of inferior gentlemen are very

small, and every room serves many purposes. In the bedrooms, perhaps, are laid up stores of different kinds; and the parlor of the day is a bedroom at night. In the room which I inhabited last, about fourteen feet square, there were three chests of drawers, a long chest for larger clothes, two closet cupboards, and the bed. Their rooms are commonly dirty, of which they seem to have little sensibility, and if they had more, clean floors would be difficultly kept, where the first step from the door is into the dirt. They are very much inclined to carpets, and seldom fail to lay down something under their feet, better or worse, as they happen to be furnished. . . .

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SAMUEL JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.

INVERARY, October 24, 1773.

. . . We passed the strait of Inch Kenneth, an island about a mile in length, and less than half a mile broad; in which Kenneth, a Scotch saint, established a small clerical college, of which the chapel walls are still standing. At this place I beheld a scene which I wish you and my master and Queeney had partaken.

The only family on the island is that of Sir

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Allan, the chief of the ancient and numerous clan of Maclean ; the clan which claims the second place, yielding only to Macdonald in the line of battle. Sir Allan, a chieftain, a baronet, and a soldier, inhabits in this insulated desert a thatched hut with no chambers. Young Col, who owns him as his chief, and whose cousin was his lady, had, I believe, given him some notice of our visit ; he received us with the soldier's frankness and the gentleman's elegance, and introduced us to his daughters, two young ladies who have not wanted education suitable to their birth, and who, in their cottage, neither forgot their dignity, nor affected to remember it. Do not you wish to have been with us ?

Sir Allan's affairs are in disorder by the fault of his ancestors ; and while he forms some scheme for retrieving them, he has retreated hither.

When our salutations were over he showed us the island. We walked uncovered into the chapel, and saw in the reverend ruin the effects of precipitate reformation. The floor is covered with ancient grave-stones, of which the inscriptions are not now legible ; and without, some of the chief families still continue the right of sepulture. The altar is not yet quite

demolished; beside it, on the right side, is a bas-relief of the Virgin with her child, and an angel hovering over her. On the other side still stands a hand-bell, which, though it has no clapper, neither Presbyterian bigotry nor barbarian wantonness has yet taken away. The chapel is thirty-eight feet long and eighteen broad. Boswell, who is very pious, went into it at night to perform his devotions, but came back in haste, for fear of spectres. Near the chapel is a fountain, to which the water, remarkably pure, is conveyed from a distant hill, through pipes laid by the Romish clergy, which still perform the office of conveyance, though they have never been repaired since Popery was suppressed.

We soon after went in to dinner, and wanted neither the comforts nor the elegancies of life. There were several dishes, and variety of liquors. The servants live in another cottage, in which, I suppose, the meat is dressed.

Towards evening Sir Allan told us that Sunday never passed over him like another day. One of the ladies read, and read very well, the evening service;—and Paradise was opened in the wild. . . .

MRS. ANNE GRANT TO MISS C. M. FANSHAWE.

STIRLING, April 1, 1809.

. . . A class of people then\* existed in Scotland—of whom few relics remain—that were peculiar to this country, and died away with the broad Scotch of Allan Ramsay,—for they would not or could not speak English properly. They were to be found in middle life, among the clergy, petty lairds, and professional people of the second class. What distinguished them from all other people was a simplicity of manners and plainness of language amounting to rusticity, yet perfectly distinct from vulgarity, and not the least allied to it; on the contrary, those derived from the most complete and intimate knowledge of Scripture, of the English classics of Queen Anne's reign, and all the touching and ennobling productions of their own national Muse. And this was combined with a taste for simplicity and a refinement of sentiment that one would little expect to meet among people moving in an humble and retired circle, without even the wish to quit it.

To make you understand what I mean, such beings as Miss Burney's Dubsters, Brangtons,

\* About forty years before the date of this letter.

and Mittenses never had an existence in Scotland; they are as new to us as the Caliban of Shakspeare. As the poet tells us, talking of the golden age, that "music held the whole in perfect peace," I verily think the pathetic strains of our national music, so very familiar to every one, and the soft and even graceful rusticity of our pastoral Muse, had some share in this singular delicacy of mind that existed often utterly independent of modes and forms, and is, I think, the prevailing charm of our bleak, uncultured country, but which is vanishing fast, as the latter is more cultivated and improved. It is that which one misses in the middle rank of life in England, where you must really rise above the obscure recesses of life before any degree of mental delicacy or culture is to be expected. Refinement, in short, is with you carried much farther, but not so generally diffused. . . .

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MRS. ANNE GRANT TO MRS. HOOK.

EDINBURGH, April 23, 1810.

. . . Of the kindness and attention I receive from many estimable and distinguished persons here, I cannot say enough. Were this to con-

tinue, however, it would be very inconvenient ; it would, in the first place, interfere with my domestic arrangements, and, what is as bad, prevent my paying the proper attention to old and worthy friends, who have equal, perhaps superior worth, with less fashion and éclat. This will subside of itself. . . .

Conversation in this Northern Athens is easy, animated, and indeed full of spirit and intelligence. Yet, though the feast of reason abounds, there is not so much of the flow of soul : this, like the gum on trees, is produced by genial warmth,—that warmth which glows only in the limited circle of social intimacy ;—there are syllogisms and epigrams, and now and then pointed and brilliant sentences, and observations and reflections both acute and profound, but neither the heart nor imagination are much concerned. In those enlightened circles there is much intelligence, and a degree of metaphysical subtlety in argument and disquisition, but little playfulness and less heart. People are too well bred, too well informed, and too well amused by the passing scene, to seek those resources in their imaginations, or to be hurried by those feelings which occupy and delight the

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simple children of nature. By simplicity I do not mean ignorance, but being unspotted by the world. At the same time, I am greatly amused by these parties, and find them incomparably superior to the dull unvaried gossip of a country town ; for here there is no detraction, and little personality. . . .

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MRS. ANNE GRANT TO MRS. HOOK.

EDINBURGH, November 20, 1811.

I have this morning the muddiest head you can suppose, having had a party of friends with me on the last two evenings. To understand the cause of all this hospitality, you must know that, being a very methodical and economical family, every cow of ours, as we expressed it in our rustic Highland dialect, has a calf ; that is to say, when we have a party, which, in Edinburgh, includes a cold collation, we are obliged to provide *quantum sufficit* for our guests, who, being of a description more given to good talking than good eating, are content to admire and be admired, and have little time to attend to vulgar gratifications ; of consequence, the more material food, after contributing, like the guests, to embellish the entertainment, remains

little diminished. As our wide acquaintance includes the greatest variety of people imaginable, there are among them a number of good, kind people, that dress finely, laugh heartily, and sing merrily, and have, in some instances, genealogy besides ; yet on these good people the lions and lionesses of literature would think their roaring very ill bestowed. These, however, make a greater noise in their own way, and before their superior prowess the substantials soon vanish ; they are in every sense less fastidious, happier because less wise, and more benevolent because less witty. An assemblage of these contented beings, who can amply appreciate the value of a custard, a jelly, or a jest on its second appearance, are convenient successors to the refined pretenders to originality, who prefer what is new to what is true, and would not, for the world, be caught eating blanc-mange, while Mr. Jeffrey and Dr. Thomas Brown are brandishing wit and philosophy in each other's faces with electric speed and brilliance. These good fat people, who sing and eat like canary birds, come with alacrity the day after, and esteem themselves too happy to be admitted so soon to consume mere mortal

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aliment in the very apartment where the delicacies of intellect were so lately shared among superior intelligences.

I am sure I am writing great nonsense with this muddy head of mine ; but I am so amused with the extravagant admiration bestowed here on this kind of reputation, that I would willingly share with you the amusement it affords me. Yet I do not augur well of this reign of wit ; it has not the heavy, oppressive vulgarity that attends the dominion of mere wealth, nor the empty and supercilious haughtiness of mere birth, yet the result of its preponderance may be more fatal in the end than either, unless restrained by certain bounds, which it has no small vanity in over-leaping. These reflections have come upon me with double force from a perusal of that flippant, old, literary coxcomb, Horace Walpole, whom I never admired, but now heartily despise. Adieu, dear friend.

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MRS. ANNE GRANT TO MRS. BROWN.

EDINBURGH, November 19, 1812.

. . . One high pre-eminence, however, that Edinburgh holds above other towns, and more particularly above London, is the liberal style of conversation. All the persons most distin-

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guished and admired here speak with a degree of respect and kindness of each other—no petty animosities or invidious diminutions, even though differing much on political or other subjects. Then, there is no scandal, no discussion of people's private affairs or circumstances to be met with in what is accredited as good society; and the consciousness that the ill-natured anecdotes of private life will not be accepted as conversation, makes people exert themselves to inform their minds, and elevate the tone of their general conduct and discourse to something at least rational. Now, in England, people in middle life are constantly talking of their superiors, and talking so very much of them, that, as Johnson says of Shakspeare, who "exhausted worlds and then imagined new," they exhaust their follies and vices, and then imagine new ones. This style of conversation is, of all the styles I have met with, the most contemptible. . . .

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SIR DAVID WILKIE TO THOMAS WILKIE.

INVERARY, August 21, 1817.

. . . I left Inverary to come down to Loch Fine to visit Mr. Macneill, of Oakfield. On

my way to the quay I heard a bagpipe sounding through the town, which I was told was the piper of the boat going round to waken the passengers. The day was just breaking, and the weather mild and beautifully clear. The sound of the bagpipe had a most national and romantic effect. The piper was followed by an immense crowd of people—a motley crew of Highland shearers come from the Hebrides, to the amount of two hundred persons, on their way to the Low Country harvest. When they came to the boat, they had all to undergo the ceremony of paying their fare before entering. Their passage from this to Glasgow (one hundred and ten miles) was two shillings, according to an agreement made with them; but I was told some had chosen to walk rather than pay the sum. The crowd, when they got on board, was immense; and in order to render the boat safe, great care was taken to seat them so as to produce the best equilibrium. The Highlanders soon began to find out amusements for themselves; one of them got hold of the bagpipe and paraded the deck with it in great majesty, while a group of them in another place were occupied in singing a Gaelic

cronach, which I thought a very interesting sort of music; it was wild and simple. In the steerage cabin another multitude was assembled, and one who had a fiddle with him, and who played very ill, gave them reels and strathspeys, to which several danced with great spirit and alacrity. These amusements continued till I left them at Loch Gilphead on Loch Fine. . . .

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THOMAS CAMPBELL TO ——

BLAIRBETH, June 22, 1836.

. . . I am delighted with every thing I see in my blessed old Scotland, except the bare feet of so many of her “bonny lasses.” Tell it not in London—publish it not in Westminster—that you see buxom young girls and (what is worse) gray-haired old women going about without shoes or stockings! I am constantly preaching against this national disgrace to my countrymen. It is a barbarism so unlike—so unworthy of—the otherwise civilized character of the commonalty, which is the most intelligent in Europe; and it is a disgrace unpalliated even by poverty in Glasgow, where the industrious are exceedingly well off.

Otherwise I like to look round even on low

life in Scotland. The tall, large-limbed peasantry, still corresponding with Tacitus' description of them two thousand years ago, are sagacious, undegenerate Caledonians. The lasses, in general, are strapping queens, with more bone than beauty, and yield the palm in soft features to yours of the South; but you see a great many good figures, and blythe, comely countenances among them. Nay, it has struck me still more than it did in France, that when Nature turns out beauty in Scotland, she takes pride and pains in making that beauty a *paragon*—even in the lowest classes. Where do you think I should have seen a head, neck, and figure—to copy which, I am sure, any great artist would take a far journey—a figure that sets you dreaming about the heroines of romance? Why, in the very servant-maid that waits at Mr. Gray's table!

The first day she served at table I was "struck all of a heap" with the living picture, but took only looks, unobserved by others, and still more by the maid herself; for the admiring gaze which a gentleman may prolong, without insult, on a lady, becomes an insult when directed to a poor servant girl. And so well I

played the hypocrite, that when the cloth was removed, and Margaret gone, the Miss G——s expressed their astonishment that I was the only man of taste to whom Margaret had ever handed the bread who had not glowered at her and gane half daft in raving about her.

I then confessed what I thought of her, and was anxious to know what sort of mind and intellect belonged to such a model. They told me she is an innocent girl, "sae gude-natured and sae bonny that we dinna like to part wi' her." Her very female fellow-servants pet her and admire her beauty. Miss G—— once overheard the cookmaid say, after she had made her toilet and dressed herself for the Kirk, "Hech, sirs, is 't no hard that I canna dress mysel wi' a' my ribbons and mutches sae as to be looked worth a preen, while that bonny darling Margaret needs but to row a clout about her head to look like a goddess!"

Yesterday a deputation of the "Campbell Club," accompanied by Professor Wilson, who had come from Edinburgh and joined the club dinner, came to Blairbeth whilst the family were from home. I rang to get refreshment for them, and fair Margaret brought it in. The

Professor looked at her with so much admiration, that I told him in Latin to contain his raptures ; and he did so, but walked round the room like a lion pacing his cage. . . . Before parting, he said : "Cammel, that might be your ain Gertrude ! Could not you just ring and get me a sight of that vision of beauty again ?" "No, no," I told him ; "get you gone, you Moral Philosopher loon, and give my best respects to your wife and daughters ! "

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OLIVER GOLDSMITH TO THOMAS CONTARINE.

LEYDEN (no date).\*

You may expect some account of this country, and though I am not well qualified for such an undertaking, yet shall I endeavor to satisfy some part of your expectations. . . . The modern Dutchman is quite a different creature from him of former times ; he in every thing imitates a Frenchman but in his easy disengaged air, which is the result of keeping polite company. The Dutchman is vastly ceremonious, and is perhaps exactly what a Frenchman might have been in the reign of Louis XIV.

\* Editors of Goldsmith variously ascribe this letter to April, May, or later, in 1754.

Such are the better bred. But the downright Hollander is one of the oddest figures in nature ; upon a head of lank hair he wears a half-cocked narrow hat, laced with ribbon ; no coat, but seven waistcoats and nine pairs of breeches, so that his hips reach almost up to his arm-pits. This well-clothed vegetable is now fit to see company or make love. But what a pleasing creature is the object of his appetite ! Why, she wears a fur cap with a deal of Flanders lace ; and for every pair of breeches he carries, she puts on two petticoats. . . .

In winter, when their canals are frozen, every house is forsaken, and all people are on the ice ; sleds drawn by horses, and skating are at that time the reigning amusements. They have boats here that slide on the ice and are driven by the winds. When they spread all their sails they go more than a mile and a half a minute, and their motion is so rapid the eye can scarcely accompany them. Their ordinary manner of travelling is very cheap and very convenient ; they sail in covered boats drawn by horses ; and in these you are sure to meet people of all nations. Here the Dutch slumber, the French chatter, and the English play

at cards. Any man who likes company may have them to his taste. For my part, I generally detached myself from all society, and was wholly taken up in observing the face of the country. Nothing can equal its beauty: wherever I turn my eye, fine houses, elegant gardens, statues, grottos, vistas presented themselves; but when you enter their towns you are charmed beyond description. No misery is to be seen here; every one is usefully employed. . . .

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CONNOP THIRLWALL TO HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, MRS.  
THIRLWALL.

ABERGWILI, August 9, 1859.

. . . I had formed a somewhat exaggerated idea of Dutch neatness and cleanliness. Leyden, on the whole, answered it best. But still everywhere there was something peculiar which you can see nowhere else. The ordinary street in a Dutch town is a picture, often, indeed, represented in the paintings of the Dutch school, but not otherwise to be seen in any other part of Europe. . . .

The churches are peculiar in themselves, and so far as they have not been disfigured by the boarding and whitewash, mostly very hand-

some, and certainly not regarded with any superstitious respect. We were rather scandalized when we were shown over one at Delft by a verger who not only kept on his cap, but was smoking his cigar all the time. And we found that we were singular and attracted some attention when we took off our hats. There is a good deal that is peculiar in the form of the Dutch service in that which may be called the National Church. It is begun with singing; then the precentor, or clerk, at a low desk below the pulpit, reads a chapter in the Bible, to which little attention seems to be paid. Before he has finished, the minister, in the old Geneva or Puritan costume, mounts the pulpit, always overshadowed by an enormous sounding-board, hangs his bonnet on the nail, and offers (in goodly contrast to the Scotch practice) private prayer. And then he begins the proper service with a short formulary, gives out a Psalm, then makes a short prayer, and, having moistened his lips with a glass of water, which is always placed by his side, begins the sermon. At the end of the first part, he generally gives out a verse or two of an appropriate hymn and sits down. After the hymn he

resumes his discourse, which is followed by more singing, a short prayer, and the blessing ("The grace of our Lord," etc.). After that, perhaps, he baptizes several children, addressing questions and exhortations to the parents, from above, and then descending to perform the rite, unless another minister is there for that purpose. During all of these operations, from beginning to end, the female part of the congregation remains seated. The men also sit with their hats on, during both singing and sermon. But for the prayer they rise and uncover their heads. The service altogether is agreeably varied, no part lasting over long; and the singing, which is generally accompanied by a fine organ, is shared by the whole congregation, the music to each Psalm and hymn being printed with it in everybody's book. This was the part which we most admired, not without regret there is so little like it in our churches. . . .

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THOMAS HOOD TO MRS. ELLIOT.

COBLENZ, January 28, 1836.

. . . My ticket to meet all the rank, beauty, and fashion of Coblenz cost only twenty groschen, and it was well worth every shilling

of the money. His Excellency General de Borstell, commander of all the Rhenish provinces, was there, and so was my tailor and the man of whom I bought my black stock. To be sure, although in one room, there was a West End. The rank particularly occupied the top corner; so the right-hand and the left corner next the door seemed to be the favorite with the snips and snobs. To do the latter justice, they behaved with much more decency and decorum than would have prevailed in such a motley assemblage in London. How would you stare, too, in London to see at a ball a score or two in the uniform of common soldiers offering their partnership to the ladies! But the fact is, as everybody must be a soldier in Prussia, there is no purchasing commissions; some of the common soldiers are the sons of barons. The dances were waltzes, gallopades, and contredanses, the last like our quadrilles. . . . They made my head spin at last with looking at them. But the music was beautiful, excellently played. I think *I* could at least have *flounced* about *in time* to it myself. The instruments were many and various. They seemed never to tire of the whirligig; and De

Franck says they often waltz upon those *polished* floors, similar to the Duke of Orange's you saw, where we can hardly walk without breaking a leg, as the Duke of York did. I was amused to see De Franck and a young lady each pull out a card or little book, and register something in the Tattersall style of betting ; it was an engagement to each other to dance together at a certain ball, perhaps a month to come. From time to time the company refreshed themselves in a suite of rooms laid out with tables, each company paying for its own. For my own part, I got on pleasantly enough amongst a party of Franck's brother officers, one of whom immediately tendered to me a glass of Cardinal, *i. e.*, Bishop (only cold), with wine, sugar, and the rind of a small green orange they grow here, of the size of a cotton ball, and which has the peculiar property, that a little too much of the rind in the mixture will infallibly give you the headache ! . . .

At last came the dance I had come to see ! Exactly at twelve, bang ! went a minor cannon in an adjoining room, and the waltz instantly broke up, and the whole room was in motion, everybody walking or running about to ex-

change salutations and kisses and embraces with all friends and acquaintances male and female. Such *hearty smacks* and hugs, and hand-shaking to the chorus of "Prosit neu jahr! Prosit neu jahr!" Some of the maidens methought kissed each other most tantalizingly, and languished into each other's arms; I am afraid because so many nice young men and gay officers were there to see it; but then the fathers and mothers were as busy kissing and bekissed. With some of the older folks it was quite a ceremony; and I should think the demand on the sentimentals was very great. And there all the while stood your humble servant—the poor English creature—the disconsolate—the forsaken—the dummy—and looker-on—and what you will—with my lips made up and my arms empty—a lay figure—while the very fiddlers were hugging! Of course I could not kiss my tailor, or embrace the man I bought the black stock of; but luckily I recognized two young ladies I have met at the *Vertues'*. (You see I stuck to the *virtuous* though Jane *was not* present.) We had never been on speaking terms, as they did not like to own to French far from the best quality. However I convinced them

mine was no better, and we complimented each other with a good deal of "bad language." So I went and looked a salute at them, which made them smile, and then the officer who had presented me the glass of Cardinal came and shook hands with me; and even this, which was my *all*, comforted me. It was really a funny scene, and if you will give a large party on New Year's eve, and have plenty of beauty and fashion, I will introduce the custom on my return. . . .

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LADY SYDNEY OWENSON MORGAN TO LADY TALBOT  
DE MALAHIDE.

BADEN, September 30, 1841.

. . . Last night we were at the most original entertainment ever given since the days of Charlemagne! by the Princess Vasa, for it was amongst the ruins of the old castle (Alte Schloss) at the top of that steep rugged mountain, which I need not describe to you. I got very nervous about going, as the descent at night was no joke! We assembled at five in the centre of the ruins, all in grand toilette—the men all *chapeau bas!* The grand spectacle was the sun setting—and the moon rising over such scenes! Here there was a collation—

three tables. I was summoned to her Royal Highness, where, by-the-bye, Lord Douglas and myself were the only British. As the night advanced, the rest of the ruins were suddenly illuminated as if by magic, and we ascended to a Gothic chamber, superbly furnished *en rococo*, where there was a concert; and a ball terminated the whole. The old dungeons rang with the echoes of the most delightful bands of music all night. . . .

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MISS CATHERINE TALBOT TO MISS ELIZABETH CARTER.

LONDON, November 26, 1750.

. . . I am told that they are English-mad at Paris, and that let ever so many English or Irish set up there to teach the language, they are overpowered with the number of their scholars. They are, too, as fond of our tabbies, stuffs, fans, and ribbands, as ever we were of their gauzes and tinsel. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

ARLINGTON STREET, November 30, 1762.

. . . George Selwyn, of whom you have heard so much, but don't know, is returned from Paris, whither he went with the Duchess

of Bedford. He says our passion for every thing French is nothing to theirs for every thing English. There is a book published, called the Anglomanie. How much worse they understand us, even than we do them, you will see by this story. The old Marechale de Villars gave a vast dinner to the Duchess of Bedford. In the middle of the dessert, Madame de Villars called out: "Oh, Lord; they have forgot! yet I bespoke them, and I am sure they are ready! you English love hot rolls—bring the rolls." There arrived a huge dish of hot rolls, and a sauce-boat of melted butter. Adieu!

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MRS. ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD TO HER BROTHER,  
DR. AIKIN.

PARIS, 1786.

. . . English is very much studied here at present: there are a great many who read, and some who talk it. Every thing of English fabric and workmanship is preferred here, and not without reason. They have an idea here very contrary to ours; for they say the English invent, and the French bring to perfection. . . . I like the gardens of the Tuilleries better than our St. James's Park; for though they are somewhat disgraced by the old-fashioned par-

terre, yet on the whole they are more gay, more lively : the view from the terrace commands a greater variety of objects ; the Tuileries is more adorned ; and the various groups of all ranks—some taking lemonade, some sitting on the grass, some even reading—give an air of ease and enjoyment more than is to be seen in our park. . . .

DAVID HUME TO WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

PARIS, December 1, 1763.

. . . Do you ask me about my course of life ? I can only say that I eat nothing but ambrosia, drink nothing but nectar, breathe nothing but incense, and tread on nothing but flowers. Every man I meet, and still more every lady, would think they were wanting in the most indispensable duty, if they did not make to me a long and elaborate harangue in my praise. What happened last week, when I had the honor of being presented to the Dauphin's children, at Versailles, is one of the most curious scenes I ever yet passed through. The Duc de B., the eldest, a boy of ten years old, stepped forth and told me how many friends and admirers I had in this country, and that he reckoned himself in the number from

the pleasure he had received from the reading of many passages in my works. When he had finished, his brother, the Count of P., who is two years younger, began his discourse, and informed me that I had been long and impatiently expected in France, and that he, himself, expected soon to have great satisfaction from the reading of my fine History. But, what is more curious, when I was carried thence to the Count d' A., who is but four years of age, I heard him mumble something, which, though he had forgot it in the way, I conjectured, from some scattered words, to have been also a panegyric dictated to him. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO JOHN CHUTE.

PARIS, October 3, 1765.

. . . What strikes me most upon the whole is, the total difference of manners between them and us, from the greatest object to the least. There is not the smallest similitude in the twenty-four hours. It is obvious in every trifle. Servants carry their lady's train, and put her into her coach with their hat on. They walk about the streets in the rain with umbrellas to avoid putting on their hats; driving

themselves in open chaises in the country without hats, in the rain too, and yet often wear them in a chariot in Paris when it does not rain. The very footmen are powdered from the break of day, and yet wait behind their master, as I saw the Duc of Praslin's do, with a red pocket-handkerchief about their necks. Versailles, like every thing else, is a mixture of parade and poverty, and in every instance exhibits something most dissonant from our manners. In the colonnades, upon the staircases, nay in the antechambers of the royal family, there are people selling all sorts of wares. While we were waiting in the Dauphin's sumptuous bedchamber, till his dressing-room door should be opened, two fellows were sweeping it, and dancing about in sabots to rub the floor.

You perceive that I have been presented. The Queen took great notice of me; none of the rest said a syllable. You are let into the King's\* bedchamber just as he has put on his shirt; he dresses and talks good-humoredly to a few, glares at strangers, goes to mass, to dinner, and a-hunting. The good old Queen, who is like Lady Primrose in the face, and Queen Caroline

\* Louis XV.

in the immensity of her cap, is at her dressing-table, attended by two or three old ladies. . . . Thence you go to the Dauphin, for all is done in an hour. He scarce stays a minute; indeed, poor creature, he is a ghost, and cannot possibly last three months. The Dauphiness is in her bedchamber, but dressed and standing; looks cross, is not civil, and has the true Westphalian grace and accents. The four Mesdames, who are clumsy, plump old wenches, with a bad likeness to their father, stand in a bedchamber in a row, with black cloaks and knotting-bags, looking good-humored, not knowing what to say. . . . This ceremony too is very short: then you are carried to the Dauphin's three boys, who you may be sure only bow and stare. The Duke of Berry looks weak, and weak-eyed; the Count de Provence is a fine boy; the Count d'Artois well enough. The whole concludes with seeing the Dauphin's little girl dine, who is as round and as fat as a pudding. . . .

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HORACE WALPOLE TO JOHN CHUTE.

PARIS, January, 1766.

. . . I am perfectly well, though to be sure Lapland is the torrid zone in comparison of

Paris. We have had such a frost for this fortnight that I went nine miles to dine in the country to-day, in a villa exactly like a green-house, except that there was no fire but in one room. We were four in a coach, and all our chinks stopped with furs, and yet all the glasses were frozen. We dined in a paved hall painted in fresco, with a fountain at one end; for in this country they live in perpetual opera, and persist in being young when they are old, and hot when they are frozen. At the end of the hall sat shivering three glorious maccaws, a vast cockatoo, and two poor paroquets, who squalled like the children in the wood after their nursery-fire! I am come home, and blowing my billets between every paragraph, yet can scarce move my fingers. However, I must be dressed presently, and go to the Comtesse de la Marche, who has appointed nine at night for my audience. It seems a little odd for us to be presented to a princess of the blood at that hour—but I told you, there is not a tittle in which our manners resemble one another. I was presented to her father-in-law, the Prince of Conti, last Friday. In the middle of the *levée* entered a young woman, too plain, I thought, to be any

thing but his near relation. I was confirmed in my opinion by seeing her, after he had talked to her, go round the circle and do the honors of it. I asked a gentleman near if that was the Comtesse de la Marche. He burst into a violent laughter, and then told me it was Mademoiselle Augустe, a dancer!—Now, who was in the wrong? . . .

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SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY TO JOHN ROGET.

OSTEND, November 10, 1781.

. . . At Versailles I assisted at the mass. The service was very short, though it was on a Sunday; for kings are so highly respected in that country that even Religion appoints for them less tedious ceremonies than it imposes on the people. The moment his Majesty\* appeared the drums beat and shook the temple, as if it had been intended to announce the approach of a conqueror. During the whole time of saying mass the choristers sang, sometimes in single parts, sometimes in chorus. In the front seats of the galleries were ranged the ladies of the court, glowing with rouge and gorgeously apparelled, to enjoy and form a part

\* Louis XVI.

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of the showy spectacle. The King laughed and spied at the ladies; every eye was fixed on the personages of the court, every ear was attentive to the notes of the singers, while the priest, who in the meantime went on in the exercise of his office, was unheeded by all present. Even when the Host was lifted up, none observed it; and if the people knelt, it was because they were admonished by the ringing of the bell; and, even in that attitude, all were endeavoring to get a glimpse of the King. . . .

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SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY TO JOHN ROGET.

November 16, 1781.

. . . The day the Dauphin was born an order was posted up in all the streets, enjoining the citizens to illuminate their houses for three consecutive nights, and to shut up their shops, and commanding the officers of the police to look to the execution of this order. Who would have thought that a people so famous for their fond attachment to their kings could have needed such an order!—an order which, even when rendered necessary by the disloyalty of a nation, can never answer any purpose, unless it be to lull a feeble government into a childish joy by an outward show of

happiness, by making an oppressed and discontented nation for a moment act the part of a happy and grateful people!

At night I walked about Paris to see the illuminations; the streets were crowded with people, and the public edifices were well lighted up; but in many of the private houses there appeared only one glimmering lamp at each window, hung up, not in token of joy, but of reluctant obedience to the Sovereign's will; and some of the citizens were daring enough not to illuminate their houses at all. In many of the squares were little orchestras with little bands of music playing to the populace, some of whom danced about in wild irregular figures. But it was at the Place de Grève that the greatest crowd was assembled. The Town-House there was greatly illuminated, a fire-work was played off, and afterwards the people were invited to dance to the music of four bands in different orchestras. The company, which consisted of the very lowest and dirtiest rabble of Paris, soon began to dance in a ring; but they were noisy rather than merry, and none seemed happy, unless happiness can be found in a tumultuous oblivion. . . .

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN TO HIS SON.

PARIS, October 5, 1802.

Here I am, after having lingered six or seven days very unnecessarily in London. . . . The character of this place is wonderfully different from that of London. I think I can say without affectation that I miss the frivolous elegance of the old times before the Revolution, and that in the place of it I see a squalid, beard-grown, vulgar vivacity; but still it is vivacity, infinitely preferable to the frozen and awkward sulk that I have left. Here they certainly wish to be happy, and think that by being merry they are so. I dined yesterday with Mr. Fox, and went in the evening to Tivoli, a great planted, illuminated garden, where all the *bourgeoisie* of Paris, and some of the better description, went to see a balloon go up. The aéronaut was to have ascended with a smart girl, his *bonne amie*; for some reason that I know not, some one else went up in her place; she was extremely mortified; the balloon rose, diminished, vanished into night; no one could guess what might be its fate, and the poor dear one danced the whole evening to shake off her melancholy.

I am glad I have come here. I entertained many ideas of it, which I have entirely given up, or very much indeed altered. Never was there a scene that could furnish more to the weeping or the grinning philosopher; they well might agree that human affairs were a sad *joke*. I see it everywhere, and in every thing. The wheel has run a complete round; only changed some spokes and a few "fellows," very little for the better, but the axle certainly has not rusted; nor do I see any likelihood of its rusting. At present all is quiet, except the tongue, thanks to those invaluable protectors of peace, the army!! At Tivoli last night we had at least an hundred soldiers, with fixed bayonets. The consul now *lives* at St. Cloud in a magnificence, solitary, but still fitting his marvellous fortune. He is very rarely seen—he travels by night—is indefatigable—has no favorite, etc. . . .

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BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON TO LEIGH HUNT.

PARIS, June 20, 1814.

I have got so much to tell you that I do not know how I can squeeze it all into one sheet; however, I will do my best. I have been to Versailles, Rambouillet, Malmaison, and St.

Cloud. I have been to the Catacombs, the Jardin des Plantes, Musée Francais, and through all the gaming-houses of the Palais Royal—such scenes as you, in your antediluvian innocence of mind in England, can never conceive, and God grant you never may! Fancy whole rooms full of gamblers; in each room a table, and each table for a different game. You can gamble for napoleons down to ten sous; each table was full, from the napoleon downwards. All eager, silent, anxious; intensely alive to the slightest motion or the slightest noise. Young interesting women were wandering about, losing at one table, winning at another; old harassed villains, with the most polished manners; and worn-out, ugly, dirty, dissipated dowagers, smothered in ragged lace, and buried beneath huge bonnets. The expressions of disappointment, of agonized disappointment; of piercing, acute abstraction; of cold, dreaming vexation; of chuckling, half-suppressed triumph, were so apparent that no man could mistake what was passing within; and as your eye wandered round, your heart sank as you recognized the thoughts of each. They all looked jaded, fagged creatures, whose lives had

been passed in the perpetual struggles of opposite passions. There was about them a dissipated neglect which marked them. The only sound that disturbed the dreadful silence of the scene was the tinkling of the money, or the smart crack of the stick as the winner jerked it towards his heap. . . .

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LADY SYDNEY OWENSON MORGAN TO HER SISTER.

PARIS, December, 1818.

. . . This being at home is by no means an expensive concern. In some houses they give nothing at all; I give simply tea. The other night a lady called for a lump of sugar; she had no sooner begun to eat it than almost everybody called for a lump of sugar; and there was my whole party, each with a bit of sugar in their hands. At last I ventured to ask what preference they had for that sort of refreshment. One said: "C'est bon pour la digestion"; another, "Cela bernis le gosier"; another, "Cela distract," etc., etc., and all this quite seriously. Now, you will allow this is entertaining your friends at a cheap rate, as you can provide a whole party at the expense of a pound of sugar. . . .

ANDREW COMBE TO HIS BROTHER.

PARIS, 1819.

. . . I have this winter seen a great deal more of French society than last year, and in a greater variety of circles. I have observed some things that appeared to me rather droll in a polite nation, and one which is constantly accusing us of barbarism and rudeness in sending the ladies away to the drawing-room after dinner, and leaving them there so long by themselves. I refer to the entire separation of the ladies from the gentlemen in some of their evening societies. This is *one* point in which Lady Morgan and I agree. At —'s house, where good society is found, the ladies *always* arrange themselves on one side of the fireplace, and the gentlemen on the other ; and *often* I have seen, for three hours, not a word pass from one party to the other. Nay, more, I have seen the gentlemen form a ring on their own side, and thus stand for an hour or two ; one half of them, of course, with their backs to the ladies. This, Lady Morgan observed, “*chez les princesses et gens du bon ton aussi.*” Such manners are worse than the English fashion of sending the ladies away to a room by themselves.

By the way, I must tell you a great compliment paid to me by Monsieur and Madame —. I often walk with them and their daughter in the Champs Elysees ; but one day lately they allowed me to conduct Mademoiselle to the Mint alone. It is very uncommon in Paris for a young lady to be permitted to walk alone with any gentleman except a brother ; but Monsieur — said that he knew me to be “*bien sage*.” . . .

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MISS MARY RUSSELL MITFORD TO MISS EMILY JEPHSON.

THREE-MILE-CROSS, August 28, 1824.

. . . I have been much occupied lately by a friend who has resided for the last six years in Paris, and cannot help telling you a story illustrative of the state of society there.

A lady of her intimate acquaintance was about to open her house for company—that is to-day, to give *soirées*, once a week. On this being known, she was waited upon by an agent of the police, who requested to see a list of the persons invited, as it was necessary that some friend of the government should be amongst them.

“Really, sir,” said the lady, “I would rather

relinquish the thing altogether than introduce a spy amongst my guests."

"Just let me see the list, Madame," retorted the policeman; and having looked at it, continued: "You need not trouble yourself—neither need I; for there are four or five of us invited already!"

Better be at Three-Mile-Cross, my dear Emily, or in your wilder and more beautiful country, than in that polished prison—that ear of Dionysius. . . .

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BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI TO HIS SISTER.

PARIS, January 16, 1843.

. . . We went to an assembly at the Hôtel de Ville, given by the wife of the Prefect of the Seine—costly beyond description, in the style of the Renaissance; and after it, where do you think we went at half-past twelve at night, M. and Madame Adolphe Barrot, ourselves, and Odillon? To the masqued ball at the Opera. They had an admirable box, the scene indescribable. Between three and four thousand *devils* dancing and masquerading beyond fancy. A thorough carnival; the *salle* of the Grand Opera formed into an immense Belshazzar's

hall with a hundred streaming lustres. The grand galoppe, five hundred figures whirling like a witches' sabbath, truly infernal. The contrast, too, between the bright fantastic scene below and the boxes filled with ladies in black dominoes and masks, very striking, and made the scene altogether Eblisian. Fancy me walking about in such a dissolute devilry, with Odillon-Barrot of all men in the world, who, though an excellent fellow, is as severe as a *vieux parlementaire* of the time of the Fronde. . . .

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THOMAS GRAY TO MRS. DOROTHY GRAY.

RHEIMS, June 21, 1730.

We have now been settled almost three weeks in this city, which is more considerable upon account of its size and antiquity than from the number of its inhabitants or any advantages of commerce. . . . What pleasures the place denies to the sight, it makes up to the palate, since you have nothing to drink but the best champagne in the world, and all sorts of provisions equally good. As to other pleasures, there is not that freedom of conversation among the people of fashion here that one sees in other parts of France; for they are not very

numerous in this place, and consequently must live a good deal together, yet they never come to any great familiarity with one another. As my Lord Conway has spent a good part of his time among them, his brother, and we with him, were soon introduced to all their assemblies. As soon as you enter, the lady of the house presents each of you a card, and offers you a party at quadrille; you sit down and play forty deals without intermission, excepting one quarter of an hour, when everybody rises to eat of what they call the gouter, which supplies the place of our tea, and is a service of wine, fruits, cream, sweetmeats, crawfish, and cheese. People take what they like, and sit down again to play; after that they make little parties to go to the walks together, and then all the company retire to their separate habitations. Very seldom any suppers or dinners are given, and this is the manner they live among one another, not so much out of any aversion they have to pleasure, as out of a sort of formality they have contracted by not being much frequented by people who have lived at Paris. It is sure they do not hate gayety any more than the rest of their country-people, and can enter into diver-

sions, that are once proposed, with a good grace enough; for instance, the other evening we happened to be got together in a company of eighteen people, men and women of the best fashion here, at a garden in the town to walk, when one of the ladies bethought herself of asking: "Why should we not sup here?" Immediately the cloth was laid by the side of a fountain under the trees, and a very elegant supper served up; after which another said: "Come, let us sing," and directly began herself. From singing we insensibly fell to dancing, and singing in a round, when somebody mentioned the violins, and immediately a company of them was ordered. Minuets were begun in the open air, and then came country-dances, which held till four o'clock next morning, at which hour the gayest lady there proposed that such as were weary should get into their coaches, and the rest of them should dance before them with the music in the van, and in this manner we paraded through all the principal streets of the city, and waked everybody in it. Mr. Walpole had a mind to make a custom of the thing, and would have given a ball in the same manner next week, but the

women did not come into it, so I believe it will drop, and they will return to their dull cards and usual formalities. . . .

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LADY SYDNEY OWENSON MORGAN TO HER SISTER.

CALAIS, August 27, 1818.

Here we are, my dear love, after a tremendous expense at the hotel at Dover, where we slept last night, and embarked at twelve o'clock this morning, in a stormy sea. The captain remained behind to try and get more passengers, and the result was, that we remained tossing in the bay near two hours, almost to the extinction of our existence. In my life I never suffered so much. As to Morgan, he was a dead man. The whole voyage we were equally bad; and the ship could not be got into port,—so we were flung, more dead than alive, into a wretched sail-boat, and how we got on shore I do not know. It rained in torrents all the time; but the moment I touched French ground, and breathed French air, I got well. We came to our old *auberge*, MM. Maurices, and the first place we got to was the kitchen fire, for we were wet and cold;—and really, in that kitchen I saw more beauty than at many

of our London parties, Madame Maurice and her daughter are both handsome women. We were obliged to have bedrooms opposite to the *auberge*, as it was quite full, but the house, Madame told us, belongs to "*maman*." She is herself about fifty, so you may guess what "*maman*" is. She is *admirable*—a powdered head, three feet high, and souflet gauze winker cap. Our chamber-maid is worth *any thing*. She is *not* one of the kitchen beauties, *par exemple*; but here she is—an ugly woman of seventy, in her chemise, with the simple addition of a red corset and a petticoat, several gold chains, and an immense cross of shiny stones on her neck, with long gold ear-rings, and with such a cap as I wore at a masquerade. With all this her name is Melanie; and Melanie has beauty airs as well as beauty name. Whilst she was lighting our wood fire (for it is severely cold) I asked her some questions about the Mr. Maurice. You may guess what a personage he is, for she said: "Ah pour notre Mr. Maurice on ne parle que de lui—partout Madame on ne s' occupe que de notre Mr. Maurice." So much for Miss Melanie and *her* Mr. Grundy. We dined at the *table d' hôte*. We had an Eng-

lishman and his wife, and a Frenchman only, for our company. The Englishman was delightful. We had a capital table, with every thing good, and in profusion ; but the Englishman sat scowling, and called for all sorts of English *sauces*, said the fish was infamous, and found fault with every thing, and said to the waiter : “ What do you mean by your confounded sour mustard ? ” The poor waiter to all his remarks only answered in English : “ How is dat, sar ? ” The Burgundy was “ such d——d stuff.” And the *last* remark, “ Why, your confounded room has not been papered these twenty years,” was too much for our good breeding ; and we and the Frenchman laughed outright. Is it not funny to see our countrymen leave their own country for the sole *pleasure* of being dissatisfied with every thing ? . . .

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LADY SYDNEY OWENSON MORGAN TO HER SISTER.

LA GRANGE, September, 1818.

. . . What would I give to have you all here ! You would be delighted with the scene of domestic happiness, enjoyment, and goodness which this family \* presents. Although there

\* The family of Lafayette.

are three families, the twelve cousins, brothers and sisters, live in the most perfect harmony. The eldest boy, Jules, ten years old, has really a sort of gallantry for the little girls, besides being my professed lover. Every morning, before I am up, he has a nosegay ready for me, which he lays on my breakfast-plate, and then another when I go to dress for dinner. Since I came to the house, I never heard the cry of a child, nor have seen the symptoms of a dispute. They are all so polite and affectionate to each other, and so unlike English children, that I am convinced the French character is more physically amiable than ours. On Sunday there was a *fête du village*, and we all walked down to the village to join it. It was completely such a scene as one sees at the opera. The villages here are very straggling, and resemble English hamlets rather than towns; but the scene of action was principally in a little square before the gates of a little nunnery, where all the nuns were assembled in their habits, in the midst of the fun. This religious house—which was founded by the Duchesse de Noailles, M. Lafayette's mother-in-law—leaves the sisterhood at liberty to go out, and is almost laical.

Several groups of young men, playing the violin, were walking through the village to select the dancers. Some were shooting arrows, others trying fortunes, a number of little booths with toys, etc., etc. The beaux had their hair powdered as white as snow, with immense queues, and dimity jackets and trousers: the women in such caps as I brought over, with a profusion of lace, gold crosses, white gowns, and scarlet aprons. At four o'clock the ball began on the green. It is astonishing to see with what perfection men, women, and children dance the quadrilles, which are here called country dances, and how serious they all look. We left them hard at it, and retired to dinner at five. They all came up to the general to speak to him. He shook hands with all the old folk, and talked to them of their farms. It was the most delightful scene you can imagine. My English dress excited great amazement, especially a long gray cloak I brought from London. In the evening there was (as there is every Sunday evening) *un bal au château*. After coffee we all went down to the hall, and there children, guests, masters, mistresses, and servants joined together in the dance, as they

had done in the morning at prayers, for there is a chapel belonging to the chateau, where the priest of the parish officiates. The servants danced in the quadrilles—six femmes-de-chambre, and all the lackeys, Oscar and Octavie, the two young ones, three and four years old, danced every quadrille, and never once were out ;—in short, these scenes of innocence, and gayety, and primitive manners are daily repeated. . . .

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THOMAS GUTHRIE TO —

HOTEL DE L'ÉPÉE, QUIMPER,

FINISTERE, FRANCE,

March 21, 1864.

I am glad that I was led to think of coming here ; there is so much in the houses, habits, manners, and dresses, to say nothing of the tongue of the people, that is strange, interesting, and entirely new. The men are the most grotesque and picturesque-looking fellows you ever laid eyes on. The stoutest Quaker would hesitate about wearing a hat of such breadth of brim. Under these hats, down to their feet, the male sex show varieties of costume according to the parish or district to which they belong ; so do the women ; and this makes the

streets and markets the finest, funniest, most interesting spectacle you could see anywhere in the world. Some of the men wear three jackets, the upper one not reaching six inches from the armpits. These are of bright blue, often with rows of brass buttons set as thick as the tailor can place them, and in addition, their edges are set off with yellow braid. Round the waist some wear a broad parti-colored sash, others a very broad leathern belt, fastened in front with a buckle as large as a good-sized saucer. The hat, which is at once a hat, a parasol, and an umbrella, carries two or three broad bands of black velvet, which fall down the back, and carry tassels at their ends. Some wear breeches of which knickerbockers are a poor and feeble imitation—enormous bags with plaited folds, exactly such as you may see courtiers of Queen Elizabeth painted in.

But perhaps the oddest thing in the appearance of these peasants is the long hair which falls out of the enormous slouch hats of the men, over shoulder and back. They preserve their hair more carefully than did Samson his; and the young good-looking lads get from this

(as they shave lips, cheek, and chin) the appearance of women. The older men (whom poor food and hard work and years have deprived of their beauty), showing a wild eye and sallow thin face out from these shaggy, long, black locks of tangled hair, have all the appearance of brigands or savages.

While the men are proud of their *manes*, the women, except in one district, don't show a lock. This fashion the lasses (who, notwithstanding, with their picturesque dresses and singularly odd but striking caps, look very pretty) turn to good account, selling their hair to peddlers, who send it on for frontlets and wigs to adorn the old age of Paris—getting a good sum, for the first crop especially. . . .

While we were in a horse-fair to-day we heard the "Angelus" sounding one, two, three—one, two, three—and then nine strokes without a pause. I was struck to see some of the Bretons pause in the thick of their talk and bargaining to take the hats off their long-haired heads, and bowing, remain for a minute or so engaged in silent prayer. I take it that those who did so were devout and earnest people, for the greater number paid no heed to the call, as it

came swinging from the tower of the distant cathedral. . . .

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LADY SYDNEY OWENSON MORGAN TO HER SISTER.

PARIS, October 8, 1818.

. . . We spent a month at La Grange that appeared an hour, and with difficulty got away. I never saw so perfect a picture of virtue and happiness. Besides our usual amusements and occupations, we had the enjoyment of the *vendages*, or gathering in of the grapes. There were about two hundred persons employed in the vineyards for three days, with all the family, visitors, children, and servants, and all went out with their little baskets and cutting-knives. May be the children were not happy! What I would have given to have had our children among them! There was little Oscar (baby in age), the future *seigneur du chateau*, laden with his basket in the morning, and dancing quadrilles in the evening, with the gravity of a French dancing-master. The *vendages*, however, is not so picturesque as I made it in my "Novice of St. Dominick." The women cut and gather the grapes in little baskets, then fill the hampers, which the men carry on their backs, while they bring their loads to immense

wagons containing hogsheads, into which the grapes are flung. Here, however, all is spoiled; for a number of little boys jump into the hogsheads, and with their naked feet bruise the grapes as they are thrown in. All the wine you drink is made so. When the vines were all gathered, the vine-dressers came in procession under the castle window, with a large vine-tree hung with flowers and fruit (like our Maypole), and carried it solemnly around the court and lawn. They had refreshments and a dance, and so ended the vintage. The wine is so plenty, that any one bringing two hogsheads gets one filled with wine for leaving the other behind him. . . .

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THOMAS GRAY TO MRS. DOROTHY GRAY.

NAPLES, June 17, 1740.

Our journey hither was through the most beautiful part of the finest country in the world. . . . The minute one leaves his Holiness's dominions, the face of things begins to change from wide, uncultivated plains to olive groves and well tilled fields of corn, intermixed with ranks of elms, every one of which has its vine twining about it, and hanging in festoons between the rows from one tree to another.

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The great old fig-trees, the oranges in bloom, and myrtles in every hedge, make one of the delightfulest scenes you can conceive ; besides that, the roads are wide, well kept, and full of passengers, a sight I have not beheld this long time. My wonder still increased upon entering the city, which, I think, for number of people, outdoes both Paris and London, The streets are one continued market, and thronged with populace so much that a coach can hardly pass. The common sort are a jolly, lively kind of animals, more industrious than Italians usually are ; they work till evening, then take their lute or guitar (for they all play) and walk about the city, or upon the sea-shore with it, to enjoy the fresco. One sees their little brown children jumping about stark-naked, and the bigger ones dancing with castanets, while others play on the cymbal to them. . . .

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THOMAS GRAY TO PHILIP GRAY.

FLORENCE, October 9, 1740.

. . . As for Florence, it has been gayer than ordinary the last month, being one round of balls and entertainments, occasioned by the ar-

rival of a great Milanese lady; for the only thing the Italians shine in is their reception of strangers. At such times every thing is magnificence: the more remarkable as, in their ordinary course of life, they are parsimonious, even to a degree of nastiness. I saw in one of the vastest palaces of Rome (that of Prince Pamfilio) the apartment which he himself inhabited, a bed that most servants in England would disdain to lie in, and furniture much like that of a soph. at Cambridge, for convenience and neatness. This man is worth £30,000 sterling a year. As for eating, there are not two Cardinals in Rome that allow more than six paoli, which is three shillings, a day, for the expense of their table: and you may imagine they are still less extravagant here than there. But when they receive a visit from any friend, their houses and persons are set out to the greatest advantage, and appear in all their splendor; it is, indeed, from a motive of vanity, and with the hopes of having it repaid them with interest, whenever they have occasion to return the visit. I call visits going from one city to another; for it is not so among acquaintances of the same place on common occasions.

The new Pope\* has retrenched the charges of his own table to a sequin (ten shillings) a meal. The applause which all he says and does meets with, is enough to encourage him really to deserve fame. They say he is an able and honest man; he is reckoned a wit too. The other day, when the Senator of Rome came to wait upon him, at the first compliments he made him, the Pope pulled off his cap: his Master of the Ceremonies, who stood by his side, touched him softly, as to warn him that such a condescension was too great in him, and out of all manner of rule. Upon which he turned to him and said: "Oh! I cry you mercy, good Master, it is true, I am but a Novice of a Pope; I have not yet so much as learned ill-manners."

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LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU TO HER HUSBAND.

GENOA, August 25, 1741.

. . . The manners of Italy are so much changed since we were here last, the alteration is scarcely credible. They say it has been by the last war. The French, being masters, introduced all their customs, which were eagerly embraced by the ladies, and I believe will never

\* Benedict XIV.

be laid aside; yet the different governments make different manners in every state. You know, though the republic is not rich, here are many private families vastly so, and live at a great superfluous expense: all the people of the first quality keep coaches as fine as the Speaker's, and some of them two or three, though the streets are too narrow to use them in the town; but they take the air in them, and their chairs carry them to the gates. The liveries are all plain: gold or silver being forbidden to be worn within the walls, the habits are all obliged to be black, but they wear exceedingly fine lace and linen; and in their country-houses, which are generally in the faubourg, they dress very richly, and have extremely fine jewels. Here is nothing cheap but houses. A palace fit for a prince may be hired for fifty pounds per annum: I mean unfurnished. All games of chance are strictly prohibited, and it seems to me the only law they do not try to evade: they play at quadrille, picquet, etc., but not high. Here are no regular public assemblies. I have been visited by all of the first rank, and invited to several fine dinners, particularly to the wedding of one of the House of

Spinola, where there were ninety-six sat down to table, and I think the entertainment one of the finest I ever saw. There was, the night following, a ball and supper for the same company, with the same profusion. They tell me that all their great marriages are kept in the same public manner. Nobody keeps more than two horses, all their journeys being post; the expense of them, including the coachman, is (I am told) fifty pounds per annum. A chair is very nearly as much; I give eighteen francs a week for mine. The senators can converse with no strangers during the time of their magistracy, which lasts two years. The number of servants is regulated, and almost every lady has the same, which is two footmen, a gentleman usher, and a page, who follow her chair.

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EDWARD GIBBON TO JOHN BAKER HOLROYD.

. BORROMEAN ISLANDS, May 16, 1764.

. . . I hardly think you will like Turin; the court is old and dull; and in that country every one follows the example of the court. The principal amusement seems to be driving about in your coach in the evening and bowing to the people you meet. If you go while the

royal family is there, you have the additional pleasure of stopping to salute them every time they pass. I had that advantage fifteen times one afternoon. We were presented to a lady who keeps a public assembly, and a very mournful one it is; the few women that go to to it are each taken up by their cicisbeo; and a poor Englishman who can neither talk Piedmontese nor play at faro, stands by himself, without one of their haughty nobility doing him the honor of speaking to him. You must not attribute this account to our not having stayed long enough to form connections. It is a general complaint of our countrymen, except of Lord —, who has been engaged for about two years in the service of a lady, whose long nose is her most distinguishing fine feature. The most sociable women I have met with are the king's daughters. I chatted for about a quarter of an hour with them, talked about Lausanne, and grew so very free and easy, that I drew my snuff-box, rapped it, took snuff twice (a crime never known before in the presence-chamber), and continued my discourse in my usual attitude of my body bent forwards and my forefinger stretched out. . . .

MISS MARY BERRY TO THE COUNTESS OF HARDWICKE.

FLORENCE, December 14, 1817.

. . . The Italians are here, as everywhere else, very unsocial in their own houses. Nothing so true as what the poor Staël said, that in Italy the theatre spoilt society, and society the theatre. No soirée holds here for a moment after nine o'clock if there is a theatre open in the town; and where one goes every evening to see the same thing, of course one looks (without always finding it) for some amusement independent of the stage. Our old friend, Madame D'Albany, whose hopes of three kingdoms (if ever she entertained them) have settled into a sort of courtesy *queenship* here, *receives* every evening, and publicly on Saturday, when her court is as dull as any real one in Europe. But on other evenings, when one finds her sometimes alone, sometimes with only three or four people, and when she comes to see one of a morning, she is not unentertaining—well informed, sensible, sharp, and heartless,—very different from what we knew her many years ago, at Paris, in Alfieri's time. . . .

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

ROME, April 6, 1819.

. . . We see something of Italian society indeed. The Romans please me much, especially the women, who, though totally devoid of every kind of information, or culture of the imagination, or affections, or understanding—and, in this respect, a kind of gentle savages,—yet contrive to be interesting. Their extreme innocence and naïveté, the freedom and gentleness of their manners, the total absence of affectation, makes an intercourse with them very like an intercourse with uncorrupted children, whom they resemble in loveliness as well as simplicity. I have seen two women in society here of the highest beauty; their brows and lips, and the moulding of the face modelled with sculptural exactness, and the dark luxuriance of their hair floating over their fine complexions, and the lips—you must hear the commonplaces which escape from them, before they cease to be dangerous. The only inferior part are the eyes, which, though good and gentle, want the mazy depth of color behind color with which the intellectual women

of England and Germany entangle the heart in soul-inwoven labyrinths. . . .

In the Square of St. Peter's there are about three hundred fettered criminals at work, hoeing out the weeds that grow between the stones of the pavement. Their legs are heavily ironed, and some are chained two by two. They sit in long rows, hoeing out the weeds, dressed in parti-colored clothes. Near them sit or saunter groups of soldiers, armed with loaded muskets. The iron discord of those innumerable chains clanks up into the sonorous air, and produces, contrasted with the musical dashing of the fountains, and the deep azure beauty of the sky, and the magnificence of the architecture around, a conflict of sensations allied to madness. It is the emblem of Italy—moral degradation contrasted with the glory of nature and the arts. . . .

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CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS TO LADY BLESSINGTON.

TORRE DEL ANNUNCIATA, NAPOLI,

Wednesday evening, 1824.

On Wednesday last, at half past twelve o'clock precisely, we started from Pompeii, and arrived in excellent health, covered with dust, hoping your ladyship is the same. After a

scientific walk through a few of the houses, we returned to our quarters, and sat down to dinner, which we performed with ease in less than five-and-thirty minutes. We then went to bed, thinking that the best way of passing the evening, and though we had no "curtained sleep," we managed uncommonly well, and it perfectly answered our purpose. Angell says that I snored, but persons are very fond of throwing their own sins upon the backs, or rather the noses, of others. . . .

We are at a delightful inn (*locanda* I call it when I speak Italian), and live in the public room, which is quite private. The bedrooms are fitted up with peculiar taste; mine contains an iron bedstead with one leg shorter than the other (which, on the first night of my arrival, deposited me safely on the floor—N. B.—stone), a wash-hand basin one inch and a quarter deep and six inches in diameter, a small piece of broken looking-glass, and half a table. It is an airy room, with four doors, which we should in England call glass-doors, only these have no glass in the openings. However, they are easily closed, for they have shutters which won't shut above half-way; however, a couple

of towels and a bit of board keep them together very snugly. The walls are stuccoed and painted in the same manner as the houses at Pompeii, only that they are quite white and entirely without ornament of any kind.

We take two meals a day besides a luncheon. In the morning a little boy, with dark- (I won't say dirty-) looking hands and face, brings us some coffee in a little tin pot. The coffee is poured over into the saucer, which saves the boy the trouble of washing it out. We can always tell how much we have had, for the coffee leaves a black mark on the cup wherever it has touched it. Upon the whole, it would be a very nice breakfast if the eggs were new, the butter fresh, and the bread not quite so sour. But the dinner makes up for all. We begin always with maccaroni—I have learned to eat it in the Neapolitan fashion ; it is the prettiest sight imaginable, and I am making great progress. We then have lots of little fish (from which, they tell me, they make *seppia*) fried ; they taste pleasantly, and black all your teeth and lips. They dress their fish with the scales on, too, which makes them look very pretty. We next generally choose a "pollastro delizioso," because it

is the tenderest thing we can get. We each take a leg and tug till it comes asunder, which it usually does in a few minutes. They are very fine birds, and when you happen to hit upon a piece which you can eat, it makes a particularly agreeable variety. When the chicken has disappeared, we call for fruit, and they sometimes bring it. The hot baked chestnuts would be delicious if they were ever warm—they never are so; but then the grapes are so hot that it comes to the same thing. When we tell the man to bring some water to wash off the dirt that is always about them, he wipes them in his own apron, which is certainly better and surer. . . .

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MISS CAROLINE FRANCES CORNWALLIS TO MISS  
HEATH.

VALCHIUSA, PESCARA, January 17, 1827.

. . . Now for a little history of Italian manners as far as I have seen. The dinner-hour is about one or two o'clock, and they walk and pay visits both before and after this. In the evening they assemble at one another's houses for the conversazione, from about seven till eleven, in morning dresses; the ladies talking of pins and needles, cambric and ribbons, the

gentlemen of who is married, and buried, and born. "I pass for a very stupid companion," said a very intelligent man, with whom I made acquaintance at one of these gatherings, "for I do not care who is married or dead, or what lady is well- or ill-dressed. I feel myself an isolated being, and am silent." . . . I first met this gentleman at a very large party, eighty people or more, and I complained of the excessive noise, which had made my head ache for three days. "You mistake; that was an exceedingly quiet party. I was at another the following evening, where there were not above half as many people, and there was much more noise—and so, indeed, it is everywhere. In Italy it is considered against the laws of good breeding to converse with one person in at all an undertone; you are expected to speak out so that all may hear, that the conversation may be general."

"But in the midst of this roar nobody can hear, and there can be no conversation at all."

"It is no loss; if you could hear, you would not find it worth your attention. Amongst my countrymen life wears away in ignorance and inutility, searching for methods of killing time,

which they have been but too successful in discovering."

The evening's amusement of the noisy party I have mentioned was the choosing, or rather drawing, husbands for the ensuing year. The names of the unmarried ladies and gentlemen of the neighborhood were written on rolls of paper, and put in separate bags; two more bags with epigrammatic couplets. Four gentlemen were employed in drawing out names alternately and reading couplets to each, and the accidental coincidences thus produced afforded much merriment. After this was over, we adjourned into another room for a sort of supper. Hot cakes of chestnut-bread were handed round, thin and pliable like leather; then sour curd, which we were expected to place on these hot cakes and convey to our mouths in primitive fashion, having neither fork nor spoon; wine in abundance followed, and cakes of other kinds, all oily and disagreeable. Then came a round game, which I could not understand, at which they were as noisy as ever; and then, it being the commencement of the carnival, came a noise like what Froissart would call "all the great devils from hell," and enter masks, whose

wit consisted in bellowing and squeaking like bulls and pigs. They were, for the most part, very tall men, dressed as nursery- and housemaids—one with a *bambino*, with which he occasionally thumped people, and this was very witty. They ate some of the cakes and departed; and then came a set in black dominoes, who said nothing and did nothing, but showed themselves and departed. . . .

The blood of the Italians seems so warmed with the heat of their summer that they are incapable of feeling cold in the winter. They sit with their feet on a little box of hot ashes, or carry a little earthen basket of them in their hands, and rarely indulge themselves with a fire in the chimney, though the thermometer, in a room without a fire, will stand as low as forty-eight degrees sometimes in the evening. The usual dress of both men and women is shabby in the extreme, and as their brick floors never are cleaned nor their stairs swept, there is good reason why it should be so. I, though not given to be very splendid in my dress, look as if I were in court apparel, and the superior neatness of my apartment and clothing has made Signor F. put on his best coat, shave,

and wash his hands, and leave off spitting on the floor when he comes to visit me; my serving man, too, now puts on a clean shirt on Sunday, and is grown quite smart. I like the lower classes, notwithstanding their dirt. I like to see their sparkling eyes, their liveliness and good humor, and I do not dislike their familiarity, because it has nothing impertinent in it. How it happens that, with their quickness of intellect, they are so much behindhand in every art of civilized life, I can hardly guess. Agostino (my man) says it is because they have not trade enough to enable a man to live without professing more than one business; as, for instance, butchers and tallow-chandlers are one and the same here, and, attempting to do too much, they do nothing well. When I told him how many hands were employed in England in the making of a single pin or needle, he held up his hands and exclaimed, "Per Bacco!" but soon acknowledged that it was much better than the Italian fashion of exercising half a dozen different callings. Every thing here is in the infancy of manufacture. Their crockery is such as has not been seen in England for these two hundred years, and will not bear hot

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water; their doors, hinges, windows, locks, etc., are the most clumsy imaginable; their furniture, made by the common carpenters (upholsterers are unknown), is heavy and coarse, and as for the paraphernalia for house-cleaning, it is unknown, because that is an operation never performed; in a hot climate you may guess what ensues from this. Yet, in spite of so many things, which in England we should deem considerable evils, such is the charm of the sun of Italy, that I can well understand how people stay here year after year, unable to resolve on returning.

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MISS CAROLINE FRANCES CORNWALLIS TO MRS.  
GEORGE FRERE.

VALCHIUSA, November 20, 1827.

... Have I told you—I know I did somebody—that the old custom of keeping a fool or buffoon for the amusement of idle hours still exists, or rather lingers, here? not regularly dressed in a motley coat, but with all the established privileges of saying and doing what nobody else may. I am assured that two or three families have such a regular buffoon to entertain them when in the country, that is, when they are half a mile out of the town. It is something

new and singular to see a whole nation condemned to utter idleness, but I believe it is so throughout Italy. The moment there is no longer the necessity of actually tilling the ground, there is no other employment, and the gentry pass from youth to age in a sort of dreamy composure, seeming to have neither hope nor wish beyond the almost simply animal life they are leading, without studies, without pursuits of any sort ; for they have not those resorted to by idleness in England—hunting and shooting. The *café*, the *conversazione*, and the theatre fill up their time ; there they retail or invent the lie of the day, which is generally as frivolous as the people who occupy themselves with it, and rise the next morning to do the same. The man who looks most like a gentleman here, and who really is of noble birth and elegant manners, spends his day at the Dogana on the frontier, solely to look at the travellers who pass, and see their trunks examined, and this serves him for talk in the evening at the *conversazione*, where every thing of more rational conversation is proscribed as pedantic. My mineralogical friend, the only man here of any attainments, curses the life he is forced to

lead, and finds himself losing his aquirements for want of the power of exercising them. The climate invites to this kind of life, and there is nothing in the national institutions to counteract it. At this time of year the houses are cold, while abroad the sun gives a heat almost like the summer of England. Few are rich enough to afford constant fires to warm the house; they wander forth, therefore, and talk with their neighbors instead of pursuing any regular occupation. In summer the houses are hot, and towards evening there is no comfort but in the open air; thus winter and summer there is a strong temptation to be idle. . . .

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HENRY CRABB ROBINSON TO HIS BROTHER.

ROME, January 27, 1831.

I have been within the walls of five Italian houses, at evening parties: at three, music and no conversation; all, except one, held in cold dark rooms, the floors black, imperfectly covered with drugget, and no fire; conversation, to me at least, very dull—that may be my fault; the topics, theatre, music, personal slander; for religion, government, literature were generally excluded from polite company. If ever re-

ligion or government be alluded to, it is in a tone of subdued contempt; for though at Florence I saw many professed *literati*, here I have not seen one; and, except at one house, of which the mistress is a German, where tea was handed round, I have never seen even a cup of water offered. . . .

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HENRY CRABB ROBINSON TO HIS BROTHER.

ROME, June 26, 1830.

. . . On the 17th and 18th of June I made an excursion of great interest with a young German artist. We went to Genzano to see the Feast of Flowers. This is one of the most primitive, simple, and idyllic feasts ever seen in Italy. Genzano, as you will see in my account of my journey to Naples, is one of the mountain towns beyond Albano, and under Monte Cavo. It is an ancient Latin city. Its situation is romantic. I went the first day to Aricia, also a delightful mountain town, where I stayed with simple-hearted, excellent people. We spent the next day in strolling in a romantic country, and in the evening we went to the *fête*. Two long streets were paved with flowers. The whole ground was covered with

boughs of box, and the centre was covered with the richest imaginable carpet of flower-leaves. These were arranged in the form of temples, altars, crosses, and other sacred symbols. Also the Austrian, French, and Papal arms were in the same way formed, "like chalk on rich men's floors." Poppy-leaves, for instance, made a brilliant red, which was the border of all the plot-grounds, or frameworks; and various flowers of rich yellows, blues, etc., were used for the appropriate heraldic colors. The procession, of course, was not to be compared with that of the Pope and cardinals on *Corpus Domini*, but it was pretty. Children, gaudily dressed, with golden wings like angels, carried the signs of the Passion; priests and monks in abundance; banners, crosses; and, borne by a bishop, with great pomp, the Monstrance, before which all knelt, except a few foreigners. All that was wanting to render the sight interesting was—not a belief in the value of such shows, but a sympathy with the feelings of others. . . .

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HENRY CRABB ROBINSON TO HIS BROTHER.

ROME, February 23, 1831.

. . . 31st January, 1831, while chatting with a countryman in the forenoon, I heard a dis-

charge of cannon. I left my sentence unfinished, rushed into the street, already full of people, and ran up Monte Cavallo. It was already crowded, and I witnessed in dumb show the proclamation of the new Pope from the balcony of the palace. No great interest seemed really to be felt by the people in the street ; but when I talked with the more intelligent, I found that the election gave general satisfaction. Bunsen, the Prussian Minister, and in general all the Liberals, consider the choice as a most happy one. Cardinal Cappellari has the reputation of being at the same time learned, pious, liberal, and prudent. The only drawback on his popularity is his character of monk. This makes him unpopular with many who have no means of forming a personal judgment. There was, however, one consequence of the election, independent of the man —it assured the people of their beloved Carnival. The solemn procession from the Quirinal to St. Peter's presented nothing remarkable ; but on Sunday, the 6th, the coronation took place—a spectacle so august and magnificent that it equalled all my imaginings. So huge an edifice is St. Peter's, that though all the decently dressed people of Rome had free entrance, it

was only full, not crowded. I was considerate enough to go early, and so lucky that I had even a seat and elevated stand in an excellent situation, and witnessed every act of sacrifice and adoration. All the cardinals and bishops and high clergy attended his Holiness,\* seated aloft. The military, the paraphernalia of the Roman Church, made a gorgeous spectacle. Nor was the least significant and affecting object the burning tow, which flashed and was no more, while the herald cried aloud : " So passeth away the glory of the world,"—a truth that is at this moment felt with a poignancy unknown to the Roman hierarchy since it was endowed with the gift of Constantine. The Pope was consecrated a bishop, he administered mass, he received the *adoration* (the word used here) of the Cardinals, who kissed his slipper, hand, and face. The bishops were admitted only to the hand, and the priests advanced no higher than the foot. . . .

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SAMUEL ROGERS TO THOMAS MOORE.

VENICE, October 17, 1814.

Last night in my gondola I made a vow I would write you a letter, if it was only to beg

\* Pius IX.

you would write to me at Rome. Like the great Marco Polo, however, whose tomb I saw to-day, I have a secret wish to astonish you with my travels, and would take you with me, as you would not go willingly, from London to Paris, and from Paris to the Lake of Geneva, and so on to this city of romantic adventure, the place from which he started. . . . But I must talk to you a little about Venice. I cannot tell you what I felt, when the postilion turned gayly around, and, pointing with his whip, cried out "Venezia!" For there it was, sure enough, with its long line of domes and turrets glittering in the sun. I walk about here all day long in a dream. Is that the Rialto, I say to myself? Is this St. Mark's Place? Do I see the Adriatic? I think if you and I were together here, my dear Moore, we might manufacture something from the ponte dei sospiri, the scala dei giganti, the piombi, the pozzi, and the thousand ingredients of mystery and terror that are here at every turn. Nothing can be more luxurious than a gondola and its little black cabin, in which you can fly about unseen, the gondoliers so silent all the while. They dip their oars as if they were afraid of disturbing

you; yet you fly. As you are rowed through one of the narrow streets, often do you catch the notes of a guitar, accompanied by a female voice, through some open window; and at night, on the Grand Canal, how amusing is it to observe the moving lights (every gondola has its light), one now and then shooting across at a little distance, and vanishing into a smaller canal. Oh, if you had any pursuit of love or pleasure, how nervous they would make you, not knowing their contents or their destination! and how infinitely more interesting, as more mysterious, their silence, than the noise of carriage-wheels! Before the steps of the opera house they are drawn up in array with their shining prows of white metal, waiting for the company. One man remains in your boat, while the other stands at the door of your loge. When you come out, he attends you down, and calling "Pietro," or "Giacomo," is answered from the water, and away you go. The gliding motion is delightful, and would calm you after any scene in a casino. The gondolas of the foreign ministers carry the national flag. I think you would be pleased with an Italian theatre. It is lighted only from the stage, and

the soft shadows that are thrown over it produce a very visionary effect. Here and there the figures in a box are illuminated from within, and glimmering and partial lights are almost magical. . . . This is indeed a fairy-land, and Venice particularly so. If at Naples you see most with the eye, and at Rome with the memory, surely at Venice you see most with the imagination. . . .

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LORD BYRON TO THOMAS MOORE.

VENICE, December 24, 1816.

. . . My "way of life" (or "May of life," which is it, according to the commentators?) —my "way of life" is fallen into great regularity. In the mornings I go over in my gondola to babble Armenian with the friars of the convent of St. Lazarus, and to help one of them in correcting the English of an English and Armenian grammar which he is publishing. In the evenings I do one of many nothings—either at the theatres or some of the conversaziones, which are like our routs, or rather worse, for the women sit in a semicircle by the lady of the mansion, and the men stand about the room. To be sure, there is one improvement upon

ours: instead of lemonade with their ices, they hand about stiff *rum punch—punch*, by my palate; and this they think *English*. I would not disabuse them of so agreeable an error,—“no, not for Venice.” . . .

MRS. MARY SOMERVILLE TO WORONZOW GREIG.

VENICE, July 21, 1843.

. . . We are quite enchanted with Venice; no one can form an idea of its infinite loveliness who has not seen it in summer and in moonlight. I often doubt my senses, and almost fear it may be a dream. We are lodged to perfection, the weather has been charming, no oppressive heat, though the thermometer ranges from 75° to 80° accompanied by a good deal of scirocco; there are neither flies nor fleas, and as yet the mosquitoes have not molested us. . . . Many of the great ducal families still exist, and live handsomely in their splendid palaces; indeed, the decay of Venice, so much talked of, is quite a mistake; certainly it is very different from what it was in its palmy days, but there is a good deal of activity and trade. The abolition of the law of primogeniture has injured the noble families more than any thing

else. We rise early, and are busy indoors all morning, except the girls, who go to the Academy of the *Belle Arti* and paint from ten till three. We dine at four, and embark in our gondola at six or seven, and row about on the glassy sea till nine, when we go to the Piazza of San Marco, listen to a very fine military band, and sit gossiping till eleven or twelve, and then row home by the Grand Canal, or make a visit in one of the various houses that are open to us. . . . The other evening we were surprised by a perfect fleet of gondolas stopping under our windows, from one of which we had the most beautiful serenade; the moonlight was like day, and the effect was admirable. There was a *festa* the other night in a church on the water's edge; the shore was illuminated and hundreds of gondolas were darting along like swallows, the gondoliers rowing as if they had been mad, till the water was as much agitated as if there had been a gale of wind: nothing could be more animated. You will perceive from what I have said that the evening, till a late hour, is the time for amusement, in consequence of which I follow the Italian custom of sleeping after dinner, and am

much the better for it. This place agrees particularly well with all of us, and is well suited for old people, who require air without fatigue. . . .

MRS. MARY SOMERVILLE TO WORONZOW GREIG.

VENICE, August 27, 1843.

. . . I wished for you last night particularly. As we were leaving the Piazza San Marco, about eleven, a boat came up, burning blue lights, with a piano, violins, flutes, and about twenty men on board, who sang choruses in a most delightful manner, and sometimes solos. They were followed by an immense number of gondolas, and we joined the *cortège*, and all went under the Bridge of Sighs, where the effect was beautiful beyond description. We then all turned and entered the Grand Canal, which was entirely filled with gondolas from one side to the other, jammed together, so that we moved *en masse*, and stopped every now and then to burn blue or red Bengal lights before the principal palaces, singing going on all the while. We saw numbers of our Venetian friends in their gondolas, enjoying the scene as much as we did, to whom it was almost new. I never saw people who enjoyed life more,

and they have much the advantage of us in their delicious climate and aquatic amusements, so much more picturesque than what can be done on land. . . .

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

FERRARA, November 8, 1818.

We left Este yesterday on our journey towards Naples. The roads were particularly bad; we have, therefore, accomplished only two days' journey, of eighteen and twenty-four miles each, and you may imagine that our horses must be tolerably good ones, to drag our carriage, with five people and heavy luggage, through deep and clayey roads. The roads are, however, good during the rest of the way.

The country is flat, but intersected by lines of wood, trellised with vines, whose broad leaves are now stamped with the redness of their decay. Every here and there one sees people employed in agricultural labors, and the plough, the harrow, or the cart, drawn by long teams of milk-white or dove-colored oxen of immense size and exquisite beauty. This, indeed, might be the country of Pasiphaes. In one farm-yard I was shown sixty-three of these lovely oxen, tied

to their stalls, in excellent condition. A farm-yard in this part of Italy is somewhat different from one in England. First, the house, which is large and high, with strange-looking unpainted window-shutters, generally closed, and dreary beyond conception. The farm-yard and out-buildings, however, are usually in the neatest order. The threshing-floor is not under cover, but like that described in the Georgics, usually flattened by a broken column, and neither the mole, nor the toad, nor the ant can find on its area a crevice for their dwelling. Around it, at this season, are piled the stacks of the leaves and stalks of Indian corn, which has lately been threshed and dried upon its surface. At a little distance are vast heaps of many-colored zucche or pumpkins, some of enormous size, piled as winter food for the hogs. There are turkeys, too, and fowls wandering about, and two or three dogs, who bark with a sharp hy-lactism. The people who are occupied with the care of these things seem neither ill-clothed nor ill-fed, and the blunt incivility of their manners has an English air with it, very discouraging to those who are accustomed to the impudent and polished lying of the inhabitants

of the cities. I should judge the agricultural resources of this country to be immense, since it can wear so flourishing an appearance, in spite of the enormous discouragements which the various tyranny of the governments inflicts on it. . . .

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MISS MARY BERRY TO MISS JOANNA BAILLIE.

BATHS OF LUCCA, September 7, 1820.

. . . I have extremely enjoyed the perfect leisure, quiet, and tranquillity of this beautiful place, where we have spent nine weeks. Numbers of our country people have been here; but as they happened to be none of them our intimate and particular acquaintance, my enjoyments have been perfectly independent of society, and I am, I believe, the only person who leaves this place perfectly satisfied with my stay here. Younger people came expecting gayety and society, and have gone away quite discontented. The last week that we have spent quite alone has perhaps been one of the most agreeable, for the great heats being over, we have been able to make morning excursions in the beautifully wooded and peopled mountains which surround us; and these excursions being made in open chairs, carried by legs much

stouter and surer-footed than one's own, are as little fatiguing to the body as they are agreeable to the mind. The peasantry of this country, their habitations, and their habits of life, the more one knows the more one likes them ; they are the most industrious, hard laboring, and contented people in the world ; and I am convinced that the dominions of the Duchess of Lucca will be the last place in which a revolution will take place. I wish all English people, who have a dreadful idea of the character of Italians (judging from postillions and inn-keepers), would come here and study it amidst the Luccese and Tuscan peasantry. The nature of their labor, their modes of cultivation, the produce of their soil, and, above all, the nymph-like beauty of their young women, give them and their country much more an Arcadian air than any thing one can conceive existing upon earth since the condemnation of man to live by the sweat of his brow.

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MISS CAROLINE FRANCES CORNWALLIS TO MRS.  
MOSSOP.

PESCHIA, June 5, 1827.

I have just had such a thorough Italian scene that you must have the description while

it is fresh. The hill opposite my house has a common footpath along the top, which leads also to a little villa of the surgeon of Pescia. This evening I heard the sounds of music which overcame the noise of my own piano, so I jumped up from it and ran to the window. I saw that the musicians were going along the hill opposite, and on my appearance they halted and descended a little way among the olives, ranged in open ranks, and gave me a sonata and then a song. Agostino was standing in the garden, and I asked him who they were; he knew no more than I did, but "*andrò a veder chi sono*" was scarcely out of his mouth ere I saw his black head and white shirt at a distance scaling the side of the hill like a chamois, all shoeless as he was. In the meantime some of the passengers stopped, formed into couples, and began waltzing to the music; Agostino soon skipped down as speedily as he had skipped up, and informed me that they were going to the villa for the amusement of the Signor. I went out afterwards for a walk, and on my return, finding the party just going back again, I was seized with the fancy to run up the side of the mountain myself, and hear

the singing nearer. I hid myself among the olives, but soon heard that I was discovered. "C'è la signora," said one, and a song was begun with allusions to me, to which the others cried bravo. Agostino meanwhile having been told where I was, came to attend me back, and as we were very near the musicians, asked if I should like to hear them: they would have come before, as they went, had they not feared that I might think it impertinent. "By all means," said I. He called the name of one with "Passi, passi!" and the whole train descended. I ran down again to be at home to receive them, and found that the party consisted of the surgeon, his wife, and children, two or three contadini, and four gentlemen amateurs. I invited them to mount a sort of terrace in front of the house, and here J. (the English maid) and my contadini—children and all together—sat down to hear the music. I sent for wine and cakes: they were gay before, and this did not lessen the gayety nor their compliments; "a brindisi al la Signora Carolina." It was now nearly dark, the *lucciole* flying about us, the sultry air, the men without neckcloths and in linen jackets, the loud, gay

talking of all classes on an equal footing, the gallantry of the Signori to little J., the dark mountains around clothed in their wood of olives, altogether formed something so unlike England that I could not forbear remarking that Italy only could produce such a scene. They retired at last, highly gratified with their reception, assuring Agostino, who acted as a kind of master of the ceremonies, that they would come and play to me all day, if I liked, some other time.

Altogether, mine is so happy a life that I think sometimes I shall have to pay for it bye-and-bye; but as I am here to recover health, I send these thoughts away when they arise, determined not to poison the present by sad anticipations. Never can I forget the simple, honest Tuscan contadini; never shall I, in the midst of English luxuries, look back without a feeling of regret to the time when I had nothing but the kind hearts of the people to make me comfortable, and yet enjoyed life more than I had ever done before. My little family portrait will then be very dear to me; I shall look at it, and fancy myself among fire-flies, and olives, and bright eyes, and smiling faces, and gay

repartees. When I said the Italians were ugly I had not been at Florence; there they are remarkably good-looking, and, I think, were you to take the same number of English, in even the handsomest counties of England, you would find the Florentines out-do them,—at least the men: the women want that which gives the most grace to a woman's face—modesty,—and this somewhat spoils most, but the features are fine.

MISS CAROLINE FRANCES CORNWALLIS TO —  
PESCARA, September 22, 1827.

. . . The absence of that cold, stiff pride which characterizes English society, where every one looks as if he saw his deadly enemy before him, is in itself something pleasant, especially to a stranger; the courteous good humor with which one's slightest wish is complied with is not a little gratifying. I might be an empress here if I pleased, for the idea of a refusal, or even a wry look, never seems to enter the head of a Tuscan, let the request be ever so unreasonable. I say *request*, because if haughtily commanded they are not so tractable; but a jest and a smile will carry them to the world's end. I know not if I have ob-

served in my former letters on the singular state of society here, where servants and masters appear in a state nearly of equality, yet in which the former never for an instant presume on that familiarity to utter an impertinence. I have seen a dirty maid-servant who was putting wood on the fire, if she was called elsewhere, tap her young master on the shoulder, put the wood-basket in his hands, and leave him to finish her work. When the Count and Countess Agostini visited their country-house, we saw them with servants and contadini, all sitting on the same bench, laughing and talking together as freely as if they were old friends; such, in fact, they were, for here the absence of poor-laws makes the poor dependent on the rich, and those who have served faithfully in their younger days remain in the family and receive their maintenance to the day of their death, if they do not marry; such, at least, is very generally the case. I fancy, in short, I see here very much the state of manners which prevailed in England in the reign of Elizabeth, when the ladies, not being very erudite, spent their time with their maids in domestic affairs, and when the retainers of the

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family were very much on the same familiar footing that I see them here. This familiar intercourse makes the tie between servant and master rather that of affection than duty, and perhaps we gain little in happiness by the refinements of civilization which place a barrier between the different classes, and which, however they may serve to make a great nation, do not certainly make a contented one. . . .

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ROBERT SOUTHEY TO THOMAS SOUTHEY.

LISBON, June 22, 1800.

We are just returned from a bull-feast, and I write to you while the feelings occasioned by this spectacle are fresh. I had never seen one. The buffoonery of teasing bullocks at Madrid was rather foolish than cruel, and its extreme folly excited laughter, as much at the spectators as the thing itself. This is widely different. The hand-bill was pompous: "Antonio de Cordeiro, who had so distinguished himself last year, was again to perform. The entertainment would deserve the approbation of a generous public. Ten bulls were to be killed, four to be tormented; they were picked bulls, of the Marquis de —'s breed (I forget his

name), and chosen out for their courage and ferocity." Yesterday the bull-fighters paraded the streets, as you may have seen rope-dancers and the "equestrian troupe" at Bristol fair. They were strangely disfigured with masques; one fellow had a paunch and a Punch-hump-back, and all were dressed in true tawdry style. Hot weather is always the season, and Sunday always the day, the amusement being cool and devout! At half after four it began: the hero was on horseback, and half a dozen men on foot to assist him; about ten or more sat with pitchforks to defend themselves, ready when wanted. The bulls were all in the arena till the amusement opened. They were not large, and not the same breed as in England; they had more the face of the cow than the short, sulky look of gentlemen—quiet, harmless animals, whom a child might safely have played with, and a woman would have been ashamed to fear. So much for their *ferocity*! Courage, indeed, they possessed; they attacked only in self-defence, and you would, like me, have been angry to see a fellow with a spear provoking a bull whose horns were tipped with large balls, the brave beast, all bleeding with wounds, still

facing him with reluctant resistance. Once I saw crackers stuck into his neck to irritate him, and heard them burst in his wounds; you will not wonder that I gave the Portuguese a hearty and honest English curse. It is not an affair of courage; the horse is trained, the bull's horn's muffled, and half a dozen fellows, each ready to assist the other, and each with a cloak, on which the poor animal wastes his anger; they have the rails to leap over, also, and they know that when they drop the cloak he aims always at that; there is, therefore, little danger of a bruise, and none of any thing else. The amusement is, therefore, as cowardly as cruel. I saw nine killed; the first wound sickened Edith, and my own eyes were not always fixed on the arena. My curiosity was not, perhaps, strictly excusable, but the pain which I endured was assuredly penalty enough. The fiercest of the whole was one of the four who were only tormented; two fellows on asses attacked him with goads, and he knocked them over and over with much spirit; two more came on, standing each in the middle of a painted horse, ridiculously enough—and I fancy those fellows will remember him for the

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next fortnight whenever they turn in bed—and their sham horses were broken to pieces. . . . A large theatre was completely full ; men, women, and children were clapping their hands at every wound, and watching with delight the struggles of the dying beasts. It is a damnable sport ! and much to the honor of the English here, they all dislike it ; very rarely does an Englishman or Englishwoman witness it a second time. . . .

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BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI TO HIS SISTER.

GIBRALTAR, August 9, 1830.

We arrived here yesterday, tired to death, but very well. The Mediterranean packet is expected hourly, and I lose not a moment in writing to you. . . . In regard to any plans, we are certainly off next packet, perhaps on Saturday. No farther can I aver. What use are plans ? Did I dream six months ago of Andalusia, where I have spent some of the most agreeable hours of my existence ? Such a trip ! Such universal novelty and such unrivalled luck in all things ! I must find time to send you at least a couple more letters from this place to complete my sketch from Cordova. If I tell you more stories of men in buckram, do not

smile. Literally, a week ago we saved ourselves only by a moonlight scamper and a change of road. I gave all up, and only at Malaga, two nights since, with our feet in our stirrups, we were obliged to dismount and lie *perdu* till morn. When I reside at a place it is not very difficult to write home, which is really always agreeable ; but if you could form an accurate idea of the life of constant fatigue and excitement which I have experienced since I left you, I do not think you would accuse me of neglect. What a country have I lived in ! I am invited by "a grand lady of Madrid"—I quote our host at Cordova—to join her escort to Granada : twenty foot-soldiers, four servants armed, and tirailleurs in the shape of a dozen muleteers. We refused, for reasons too long here to detail, and set off alone two hours before, expecting an assault. I should tell you we dined previously with her and her husband, having agreed to meet to discuss matters. It was a truly Gil Blas scene. My lord, in an undress uniform, slightly imposing in appearance, greeted us with dignity ; the signora, exceedingly young and really very pretty, with infinite vivacity and grace. A French valet leaned on

his chair, and a duenna, such as Stephanoff would draw, broad and supercilious, with jet eyes, mahogany complexion, and cocked-up nose, stood by my lady, bearing a large fan. She was most complaisant, as she evidently had more confidence in two thick-headed Englishmen with their Purdeys and Mantons than in her specimen of the once famous Spanish infantry. She did not know that we are cowards on principle. I could screw up my courage to a duel or a battle, but I think my life worth five pounds in the shape of ransom to José Maria. In spite of her charms and their united eloquence, which, as they only spoke Spanish, was of course most persuasive, we successfully resisted. The moon rises on our course ; for the first two leagues all is anxiety, as it was well known that a strong band was lying in wait for the "great lady." After two leagues we began to hope, when suddenly our guide informs us that he hears a trampling of horses in the distance. Ave Maria ! A cold perspiration came over me. Decidedly they approached, but rather an uproarious crew. We drew up out of pure fear, and I had my purse ready. The band turned out to be a company

of actors travelling to Cordova. There they were, dresses and decorations, scenery and machinery, all on mules and donkeys, for there are no roads in this country. The singers rehearsing an opera ; the principal tragedian riding on an ass ; and the buffo, most serious, looking as grave as night, with a cigar, and in greater agitation than them all. Then there were women in side-saddles, like sedans, and whole paniers of children, some of the former chanting an ave, while their waists (saving your presence, but it is a rich trait) were in more than one instance encircled by the brawny arm of a more robust devotee. All this irresistibly reminded me of Cervantes. We proceed and meet a caravan (*corsario* they call it, but I spell from sound) of armed merchants, who challenged us, with a regular piquet, and I nearly got shot for not answering in time, being somewhat before my guide. Then came two travelling friars, who give us their blessing, and then we lose our way. We wander about all night ; dawn breaks, and we stumble on some peasants sleeping in the field amid their harvest. We learn that we cannot regain our road, and, utterly wearied, we finally sink to sound sleep

with our pack-saddles for our pillows. This is the country for a national novelist. The *al fresco* life of the inhabitants induces a variety of the most picturesque manners; their semi-savageness makes each district retain with barbarous jealousy its own customs and its own costumes. . . . You are awakened from your slumbers by the *rosario*—the singing procession by which the peasantry congregate to their labors. It is most effective, full of noble chants and melodious responses, that break upon the still fresh air and your even fresher feelings in a manner truly magical. O wonderful Spain! Think of this romantic land covered with Moorish ruins and full of Murillo! Ah, that I could describe to you the wonders of the painted temples of Seville! Ah, that I could wander with you amid the fantastic and imaginative halls of delicate Alhambra! Why, why cannot I convey to you more perfectly all that I see and feel? . . .

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CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS TO HIS MOTHER.

POLA, July 11, 1828.

Here I am still, under the most charming, the most delightful of all circumstances that can be imagined. Alone, and without one

farthing to bless myself with, in pawn as it were, without the power, for I know not how long, of being redeemed. After waiting beyond the time we had at first intended for the remittance daily expected from D'Egville's father, my quarter's money being naturally enough exhausted, having had to serve for two instead of one for nearly three months, we found that there was nothing left for us but one of two things,—either to live in banishment at Pola till my next quarter's arrival, or for D'Egville to start for Venice and draw upon Schielin for the requisite money, and send it to me at Pola to release me from my confinement. This last plan we of course adopted, and you may imagine how melancholy I might be at seeing him start to leave me for a fortnight at least in this uninhabited savage place. . . .

PEIZO, July 18, 1828.

Here I am still in pawn, but by a turn of fate enjoying myself mightily. Two days after my last letter I went on a little trip on horse-back with the lawyer of Pola, a young German, to visit the neighboring villages, and I had a most delightful day. From Pola we went to the Isle of Olives, not very far distant, where

we found the Sclavonian peasants celebrating a festival, and after taking our share in the dancing and merriment for a couple of hours, we continued our journey to Dignano, a little village only celebrated from the remarkable dress of the peasants. I was very much pleased indeed with them. The women, amongst whom were some very pretty girls, were dressed exactly in the style of the old Venetian ladies, as we see them in old prints, and had a most surprising effect as they stood in groups about the town. My dear "slight acquaintance" finding me so much delighted with these dresses, proposed extending our ride to Peroi, another small village at five miles' distance, and one of the wonders of Istria, being a small colony of Greeks, consisting of about sixty families, all peasants, preserving its ancient religion, costume, and manners, and speaking its original language, in the midst of Italians, Istrians, and Sclavonians. I jumped at the proposal, and was amply repaid for my trouble. I never met with any thing so elegant and so picturesque as these people, the girls very handsome, particularly tall and well made, and the men equally so. The faces are strictly

Greek, and the dress charming. I had scarcely entered the place before I determined upon removing there next day, it being only seven miles from Pola, and accordingly picking out the prettiest house, and that which contained the prettiest girls, I told them my intentions, and gave them to expect me the next day. It so happened that this family was related to my landlord Cronopoli, at Pola, also a Greek, which gave me greater facility in obtaining this favor (for it is considered a great favor, and one never granted to strangers) to take up my abode amongst them. The day before yesterday I arrived with my drawing materials, clothes, etc., and here I am established. On my arrival I explained that I came to be one of the family and not to be treated as a *gentleman*, and accordingly I proceeded with them into the fields to help the cutting of barley, and to their great delight dressed myself in their costume, which I did also to my own great delight; in short, I found myself once more as among the Neapolitan peasantry, happy amidst the innocent simplicity and real enjoyments of unsophisticated nature. The perfect pleasure I felt while dancing, singing, and playing with

these beautiful Greek girls I cannot tell you, enhanced by the feeling that I had already usurped a small nook in their hearts by having thus accommodated myself to their manners. It was quite charming to see them gradually throwing off the reserve of the first day, and beginning to regard me really as one of the family. The pride they had in dressing me and taking me about with them was great. I had good cause to wear out my legs in dancing with them on the rough stones of the village, for one after another engaged with me till I had gone through the whole string. I then made a sketch of one of them who had been married about a month, in her bridal dress, a copy of which I gave her. At three o'clock I am up and out with them in the fields, partaking of their food as well as their pursuits, the acme of which consists in a couple of hard eggs and a bit of brown bread; not being quite able to accommodate my stomach to the more ordinary fare of bread cooked in oil and vinegar, and dreadfully fat bacon. Fancy me at this moment writing to you, dressed in a white sort of body and petticoat, richly worked in red, blue, and yellow silk, an embroidered handkerchief on

my head, and red stockings bound with red sashes up to the knee, and sheepskin sandals. . . .

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CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS TO HIS MOTHER.

PEROI, July 25, 1828.

. . . A few days more and I shall be again in civilized parts, having engaged a vessel for the day after to-morrow to convey me to Trieste. In the meantime I must continue my description of Peroi. You have no idea of the little paradise that it is. I begin quite to love the people and to fancy myself one of them. . . . What would I not give that you could possess, through the means of some beneficent fairy, the glass that I have read of in some child's book in which the possessor could behold at every moment of the day the absent person, and contemplate his occupations and situations. The first thing in the morning you would look in the glass (as you no doubt do as it is) and instead of beholding yourself in a laced night-cap with sky-blue bandeau, you would see me (but you must get up at three o'clock to do so) sitting on a stone bench, surrounded by a half dozen pretty, innocent girls; the one adjusting my head and tying on my

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worsted handkerchief, another lacing my sandals, and all occupied in the decoration of their new-found toy. Near me you would see others, with their beautiful black hair hanging down to their waists, and undergoing the operation of plaiting, till it takes the most beautiful classic form that can be desired. Here and there, at intervals, are three or four fine tall lads, with ample moustachios, trotting to the fields on horseback, with large trusses of straw before them, and saddle-bags hanging on each side, displaying in their capacious gaping mouths (not the lads, but the saddle-bags) the store of brown bread and wine-kegs for their banquet; and a young foal ambling after her aged mother, and now and then seizing her by her swishy tail, and kicking from pure fun and frolic. Then will pass by a little brown bare-legged boy, with a flock of sheep, with here and there a reverend old ram, decorated with bells and red ribbons—a most picturesque group, making dust enough to smother the whole village.

You will gaze for a moment in admiration of the beauty of the lad; his fine Greek face and large intelligent eyes, dressed only in a sheep-skin thrown most gracefully over him, and con-

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fined with a crimson sash; a pair of sandals and a slouched hat defending his two extremities, and a double pipe of rude form resounding through the woods as he saunters after his family. A short time after you will see the whole village in motion—girls, boys, old men and old women, and myself in the midst of the throng, moving forward in procession, some with pitchers on their heads, to begin the labor of the day. You will hear, if your ears are good enough, the choruses of villagers, very different from the compositions of Bishop, arranged most harmoniously by themselves, and sung most correctly in parts. The melody you will hear some day imitated by me, as copied exactly from themselves. During the interval of these choruses you will probably—but you must listen well—hear a solo, though of a somewhat more sprightly character, and in a more comprehensible language, in a voice not unfamiliar to you, and at the same time you will observe the pleasure without humbug, and the approbation without flattery, expressed upon the smiling countenances of the rest of the party. An hour or two afterwards you, perhaps, will take up the glass again—fancy

it's a looking-glass, and so you can resume the scrutiny many times through the day without much effort—and you will see the party dispersed in various groups over the landscape, and under the shade of some old tree you will see me lying with a book in my hand—most probably a Byron or Moore—in the character of an Arcadian, casting occasional affectionate looks towards my darling peasants at their work. . . . Then about the time my father's trumpet announces his approach to the breakfast-room—while waiting for the arrival of his smoking steak—take a glance at me sitting as one of my smiling circle, with a hard egg in each hand, a small loaf of whiter bread than the rest, baked on purpose for me and regarded as a *chef-d'œuvre* in its kind, on my knees, and a wooden bowl as white as snow before me full of wine and water, to afford a tolerable easy passage to my frugal fare; while my companions, with appetites scarcely credible, dispose of bucketful after bucketful of bread made into soup by the addition of oil and vinegar, till you begin to doubt whether the feat is performed by elephants or peasants. . . . The natural consequence of this light repast, added

to the heat of an Istrian sun, is a general inclination to sleep; the girls most modestly seeking some shady spot at a distance, somewhat remote from the male part of the community. Then, for a couple of hours, you may put down your glass while we give ourselves up to sweet slumbers. . . .

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LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU TO ALEXANDER POPE.

ADRIANOPL, April 1, O. S., 1717.

. . . I am at this present moment writing in a house situated on the banks of the Hebrus, which runs under my chamber window. My garden is all full of cypress trees, upon the branches of which several couple of true turtles are saying soft things to one another from morning to night. How naturally do *boughs* and *vows* come into my mind at this minute! and must not you confess, to my praise, that 't is more than an ordinary discretion that can resist the wicked suggestions of poetry, in a place where truth, for once, furnishes all the ideas of pastoral. The summer is already far advanced in this part of the world; and for some miles round Adrianople, the whole ground

is laid out in gardens, and the banks of the rivers are set with rows of fruit trees, under which all the most considerable Turks divert themselves every evening, not with walking; that is not one of their pleasures; but a set party of them choose out a green spot, where the shade is very thick, and there they spread a carpet, on which they sit drinking their coffee, and are generally attended by some slave with a fine voice, or that plays on some instrument. Every twenty paces you may see one of these little companies listening to the dashing of the river; and this taste is so universal that the very gardeners are not without it. I have often seen them and their children sitting on the banks of the river, and playing on a rural instrument perfectly answering the description of the ancient *fistula*, being composed of unequal reeds, with a simple but agreeable softness in the sound.

Mr. Addison might here make the experiment he speaks of in his travels, there not being one instrument of music among the Greek or Roman statues that is not to be found in the hands of the people of this country. The young lads generally divert themselves with

making garlands for their favorite lambs, which I have often seen painted and adorned with flowers lying at their feet, while they sung or played. It is not that they ever read romances, but these are the ancient amusements here, and as natural to them as cudgel-playing and football to our British swains; the softness and warmth of the climate forbidding all rough exercises, which were never so much as heard of amongst them, and naturally inspiring a laziness and aversion to labor, which the great plenty indulges. These gardeners are the only happy race of country people in Turkey. They furnish all the city with fruits and herbs, and seem to live very easily. They are most of them Greeks, and have little houses in the midst of their gardens, where their wives and daughters take a liberty not permitted in the town—I mean, to go unveiled. These wenches are very neat and handsome, and pass their time at their looms under the shade of the trees. . . .

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SIR DAVID WILKIE TO SIR PETER LAURIE.  
CONSTANTINOPLE, November 6, 1840.

. . . By that noble but as yet useless river, the Danube, we by the steamboat for days

glided through wide wastes and wildness, till we came upon the Turkish frontier, where the towns we touched at, and the passengers we took up, made familiar to our eyes the strange dwellings and characters of an Asiatic people. Still every previous cause of wonder was outdone by Constantinople itself. To you this capital would recall in many things, particularly its vast size, London; but in how many things what a contrast! What you, as a civilian, would think indispensable to keep together so large a community has never been known. The houses are not numbered; the streets have no names; the coaches are very few, many of them dragged by oxen, and can only pass through a few of the streets. There is no post-office; the town is not lighted by night; many of the streets are unpaved, and those that are, so ill, that by the mud with which they are encumbered it is quite an adventure to get along. Sweeping or cleaning the streets is never thought of; and the only scavengers are an innumerable host of dogs, whom nobody owns, that snarl and fight by day and howl by night. The houses are nearly all of wood, and so closely huddled together as to make the devasta-

tion of fire, when it occurs, most alarming. We even wonder the more at all this, remembering that it was once built by the Romans ; once the seat of arts, and the preserver of arts ; with a situation on heights, divided by the Bosphorus, more splendid than any city ; with many palaces and mosques, large, compared to our public buildings ; and with the great mosque of St. Sophia, nearly as large as St. Paul's. So uncouth, unexpected, and strange was every object in the first week of our arrival, that I could not help exclaiming to my English companions what Dandie Dinmont said on his first view of Pleydel in the chair of High Jinks : "Deil the like o' this I ever saw." . . .

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BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI TO HIS FATHER.

PREVESA, October 25, 1830.

. . . I mentioned in my letter to you that there was a possibility of our paying the Grand Vizier a visit at his quarters at Yanina, the capital of Albania. What was then probable has since become certain. We sailed from Corfu to this place, where we arrived on the eleventh instant, and found a most hospitable and agreeable friend in the Consul-General, Mr.

Meyer, to whom Sir Frederick had given me a very warm letter. He is a gentleman of the old school, who has moved in a good sphere, and has great diplomatic experience of the East. He insists upon our dining with him every day, and what is even still more remarkable, produces a *cuisine* which would not be despicable in London, but in this savage land of anarchy is indeed as surprising as it is agreeable.

As the movements of his highness were very uncertain, we lost no time in commencing our journey to Yanina. We sailed up to Salora (I mention these places, because you will be always able to trace my route in your new maps), and on the morning of the 14th, a company of six horsemen, all armed, we set off for Arta, where we found accommodation ready for us, in a house belonging to the consulate. Arta, once a town as beautiful as its situation, is in ruins, whole streets razed to the ground, and, with the exception of the consulate house, rebuilt since, scarcely a tenement which was not a shell. Here, for the first time, I reposed upon a divan, and for the first time heard the muezzin from the minaret, a ceremony which

is highly affecting when performed, as it usually is, by a rich and powerful voice. Next morning we paid a visit to Kalio Bey, the Governor, once the wealthiest, and now one of the most powerful, Albanian nobles. He has ever been faithful to the Porte, even during the recent insurrection, which was an affair of the great body of the aristocracy. We found him keeping his state, which, in spite of the surrounding desolation, was not contemptible, in something not much better than a large shed. I cannot describe to you the awe with which I first entered the divan of a great Turk, or the curious feelings with which, for the first time in my life, I found myself squatting on the right of a Bey, smoking an amber-mouthed chibouque, drinking coffee, and paying him compliments through an interpreter. He was a very handsome, stately man, grave, but not dull, and remarkably mild and bland in his manner, which may perhaps be ascribed to a recent imprisonment in Russia, where, however he was treated with great consideration, which he mentioned to us. He was exceedingly courteous, and would not let us depart, insisting upon our repeating our pipes, an unusual honor. At

length we set off from Arta, with an Albanian of his body-guard for an escort, ourselves and guides (six in number), and two Albanians, who took advantage of our company. All these Albanians are armed to the teeth, with daggers, pistols, and guns, invariably richly ornamented, and sometimes entirely inlaid with silver, even the tassel. This was our procession :

An Albanian of the Bey's guard, completely armed.

Turkish guides, with baggage.

Three Beyasdeers Inglasses, or sons of English Beys, armed after their fashion.

Giovanni, covered with mustaches and pistols.

Boy carrying a gazel.

An Albanian completely armed.

The gazel made a capital object, but gave us a great deal of trouble. In this fashion we journeyed over a wild mountain pass—a range of the ancient Pindus—and two hours before sunset, having completed only half our course in spite of all our exertions, we found ourselves at a vast but dilapidated khan as big as a Gothic castle, situated on a high range, and built as a sort of half-way house for travellers by Ali Pasha when his long, gracious, and unmolested

reign had permitted him to turn this unrivalled country, which combines all the excellences of Southern Europe and Western Asia, to some of the purposes for which it is fitted. This khan had now been turned into a military post; and here we found a young Bey, to whom Kalio had given us a letter in case of our stopping for an hour. He was a man of very pleasing exterior, but unluckily could not understand Giovanni's Greek, and had no interpreter. What was to be done? We could not go on, as there was not an inhabited place before Yanina; and here were we sitting before sunset on the same divan with our host, who had entered the place to receive us, and would not leave the room while we were there, without the power of communicating an idea. We were in despair, and we were also very hungry, and could not, therefore, in the course of an hour or two plead fatigue as an excuse for sleep, for we were ravenous, and anxious to know what prospect of food existed in this wild and desolate mansion. So we smoked. It is a great resource; but this wore out; and it was so ludicrous smoking and looking at each other, and dying to talk, and then exchanging

pipes by way of compliment, and then pressing our hand to our heart by way of thanks. The Bey sat in a corner, I unfortunately next, so I had the onus of mute attention; and Clay next to me, so he and M—— could at least have an occasional joke, though of course we were too well bred to exceed an occasional and irresistible observation. Clay wanted to play *écarté*, and with a grave face, as if we were at our devotions; but just as we were about commencing, it occurred to us that we had some brandy, and that we would offer our host a glass, as it might be a hint for what should follow so vehement a schnaps. Mashallah! Had the effect only taken place 1830 years ago, instead of in the present age of scepticism, it would have been instantly voted a first-rate miracle. Our mild friend smacked his lips, and instantly asked for another cup—we drank it in coffee-cups. By the time that Meredith had returned, who had left the house on pretence of shooting, Clay, our host, and myself had despatched a bottle of brandy in quicker time and fairer proportions than I ever did a bottle of Burgundy, and were extremely gay. Then he would drink again with Meredith, and ordered some figs,

talking, I must tell you, all the time, indulging in the most graceful pantomime, examining our pistols, offering us his own golden ones for our inspection, and finally making out Giovanni's Greek enough to misunderstand most ludicrously every observation we communicated. But all was taken in good part, and I never met such a jolly fellow in the course of my life. In the meantime we were ravenous, for the dry, round, unsugary fig is a great whetter. At last we insisted upon Giovanni's communicating our wants, and asking for bread. The Bey gravely bowed and said, "Leave it to me; take no thought"; and nothing more occurred. We prepared ourselves for hungry dreams, when to our great delight a most capital supper was brought in, accompanied, to our great horror, by—wine. We ate, we drank, we ate with our fingers, we drank in a manner I never recollect. The wine was not bad, but if it had been poison we must drink; it was such a compliment for a Moslemin; we quaffed it in rivers. The Bey called for the brandy; he drank it all. The room turned round; the wild attendants who sat at our feet seemed dancing in strange and fantastic whirls; the Bey shook hands with

me ; he shouted English—I Greek. "Very good" he had caught up from us. "Kalo, kalo," was my rejoinder. He roared; I smacked him on the back. I remember no more. In the middle of the night I woke. I found myself sleeping on the divan, rolled up in its sacred carpet; the Bey had wisely reeled to the fire. The thirst I felt was like that of Dives. All were sleeping except two, who kept up during the night the great wood fire. I rose lightly, stepping over my sleeping companions and the shining arms that here and there informed me that the dark mass wrapped up in a capote was a human being. I found Abraham's bosom in a flagon of water. I think I must have drunk a gallon at the draught. I looked at the wood fire, and thought of the blazing blocks in the hall at Bradenham, asked myself whether I was indeed in the mountain fastness of an Albanian chief, and, shrugging my shoulders, went to bed and woke without a headache.

We left our jolly host with regret. I gave him my pipe as a memorial of having got tipsy together.

Next day, having crossed one more steep

mountain-pass, we descended into a vast plain, over which we journeyed for some hours. . . .

At the end of the plain, immediately backed by very lofty mountains, and jutting into the beautiful lake that bears its name, we suddenly came upon the city of Yanina—suddenly, for a long tract of gradually rising ground had hitherto concealed it from our sight. . . . A swarming population, arrayed in every possible and fanciful costume, buzzed and bustled in all directions. As we passed on—and you can easily believe not unobserved, where no "*My-lorts Ingles*" (as regular a word among the Turks as the French and Italians) had been seen for more than nine years—a thousand objects attracted my restless attention and roving eye. Every thing was so strange and splendid that for a moment I forgot that this was an extraordinary scene, even for the East, and gave up my fancy to a full credulity in the now obsolete magnificence of Oriental life. Military chieftains clothed in the most brilliant colors and most showy furs, and attended by a *cortége* of officers equally splendid, continually passed us; now for the first time a dervish saluted me, and now a Delhi with his

high cap reined in his desperate steed, as the suite of some pasha blocked up the turning of the street. The Albanian costume, too, is inexhaustible in its combinations, and Jews and Greek priests must not be forgotten. It seemed to me that my first day in Turkey brought before me all the popular characteristics of which I had read, and which I expected I occasionally might see during a prolonged residence. I remember this very day I observed a Turkish sheik in his entirely green vestments; a scribe with his writing materials in his girdle; and a little old Greek physician, who afterwards claimed my acquaintance on the plea of being able to speak English, that is to say, he could count nine on his fingers, no further (literally a fact). I gazed with a strange mingled feeling of delight and wonder. Suddenly a strange, wild, unearthly drum is heard, and at the end of the street a huge camel (to me it seemed as large as an elephant), with a slave sitting cross-legged on his neck and playing an immense kettle-drum, appears, and is the first of an apparently interminable procession of his Arabian brethren. The camels were very large; they moved slowly, and were many in number; I should

think there might have been between sixty and a hundred. It was an imposing sight. All immediately hustled out of the way of the caravan, and seemed to shrink under the sound of the wild drum. This procession bore corn for the Vizier's troops encamped without the wall.

It is in vain that I attempt to convey to you all that I saw and felt this wondrous week. To lionize, and be a lion at the same time, is a hard fate. When I walked out, I was followed by a crowd ; when I stopped to buy any thing, I was encompassed by a circle. How shall I convey to you an idea of all the pashas, and all the agahs, and all the selictars whom I have visited, and who have visited me ; all the coffee I sipped, all the pipes I smoked, all the sweetmeats I devoured ? But our grand presentation must not be omitted. An hour having been fixed for the audience, we repaired to the celebrated fortress-palace of Ali, which, though greatly battered in successive sieges, is still inhabitable, and yet affords a very fair idea of its old magnificence. Having passed the gates of the fortress, we found ourselves in a number of small streets, like those in the liberties of the Tower or any other castle, all full of life, stirring and excited ;

and then we came to a grand place, in which, on an ascent, stands the palace. We hurried through courts and corridors, all full of guards and pages and attendant chiefs, and in fact every species of Turkish population, for in these countries one head does every thing; and we, with our subdivision of labor and intelligent and responsible deputies, have no idea of the labor of a Turkish Premier. At length we came to a vast irregular apartment, serving as an immediate antechamber to the Hall of Audience. This was the finest thing I have ever yet seen. In the whole course of my life I never met any thing so picturesque, and cannot expect to do so again. I do not attempt to describe it; but figure to yourself the largest chamber that you ever were perhaps in, full of the choicest groups of an Oriental population, each individual waiting by appointment for an audience, and probably about to wait forever. In this room we remained, attended by the Austrian Consul who presented us, about ten minutes —too short a time. I never thought that I could have lived to have wished to kick my heels in a minister's antechamber. Suddenly we are summoned to the awful presence of the pillar of

the Turkish Empire, the man who has the reputation of being the mainspring of the new system of regeneration, the renowned Redschid; an approved warrior, a consummate politician, unrivalled as a dissembler in a country where dissimulation is the principal portion of their moral culture.

The hall was vast, built by Ali Pasha purposely to receive the largest Gobelins carpet that was ever made, which belonged to the chief chamber in Versailles, and was sold to him in the Revolution. It is entirely covered with gilding and arabesques. Here, squatted upon a corner of the large divan, I bowed with all the nonchalance of St. James' Street to a little, ferocious-looking, shrivelled, careworn man, plainly dressed, with a brow covered with wrinkles, and a countenance clouded with anxiety and thought. I entered the shed-like divan of the kind and comparatively insignificant Kalio Bey with a feeling of awe; I seated myself on the divan of the Grand Vizier ("who," the Austrian Consul observed, "has destroyed in the course of the last three months," *not* in war, "upward of four thousand of my acquaintance") with the self-possession of a morning

call. At a distance from us, in a group on his left hand, were his secretary and his immediate suite ; the end of the saloon was lined by lackeys in waiting. . . . Some compliments now passed between us, and pipes and coffee were then brought by four of these lackeys ; then his Highness waved his hand, and in an instant the chamber was cleared. Our conversation I need not repeat. We congratulated him on the pacification of Albania. He rejoined that the peace of the world was his only object, and the happiness of mankind his only wish : this went on for the usual time. He asked us no questions about ourselves or our country, as the other Turks did, but seemed quite overwhelmed with business, moody and anxious. While we were with him three separate Tartars arrived with despatches. What a life ! and what a slight chance for the gentlemen in the antechamber !

After the usual time we took our leave, and paid a visit to his son Amin Pasha, a youth of eighteen, but who looks ten years older, and who is Pasha of Yanina. He is the very reverse of his father ; incapable in affairs, refined in his manners, plunged in debauchery, and

magnificent in his dress. Covered with gold and diamonds, he bowed to us with the ease of a Duke of Devonshire, said the English were the most polished of nations, etc. But all these visits must really be reserved till we meet. . . .

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REGINALD HEBER TO RICHARD HEBER.

ST. PETERSBURGH, December, 1805.

. . . Sledge-driving is the favorite amusement, and I think it a very stupid one, unless for the sake of showing off a fine pair of horses. The horses used for this purpose are broke in a particular manner: one trots, and the other canters, prances, kicks, and rears with great pretended violence—all which he does so as to keep pace with the other; they pay an enormous price for a horse of this kind, well trained. A well-equipped sledge is a beautiful and striking object, and answers to curricles and phætons in England. No man, however, can pay visits without having a carriage; and if he aspires to any thing like noble society, or to the character of *gentilhomme*, his carriage must be drawn by four horses, all with long manes, and the traces three times longer than necessary; the coachman is a venerable figure, with a long

gown, beard, and square cap, like those worn by Bishops Parker and Grindall in their pictures. The postilion is a little boy in the same dress, girt tight around him with a broad red sash ; he rides on what we should call in England the wrong horse, holds his whip in the left hand, and is obliged to cry out continually like the children who drive the cows from the corn-field. This he is obliged to do, as there are no footways ; and they drive so fast, that if the streets were not very wide and the population very thin, accidents must continually happen. Very neat carriages and sets of horses of this description are always to be hired by the month, and we have got a remarkably good one. The carriages and furniture of all sorts in Russia are so minutely copied from the English, that it would require the eye of a connoisseur to distinguish them. . . .

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REGINALD HEBER TO HIS MOTHER.

ST. PETERSBURGH, December, 1805.

. . . The emperor is not the only sight we have seen, having been at court, and at a grand religious ceremony of the Tartars. We have as yet only been to court as spectators, as there

is, at present, no English ambassador to introduce us ; but having a recommendation to the master of the ceremonies, he very kindly gave us an opportunity of seeing every thing to the best advantage, and introduced us to a gentleman who explained their religious ceremonies, for all the levees and drawing-rooms begin with service in the chapel. On our first entrance into the room we found it full of officers and foreign ministers, who ranged themselves in two lines for the empress to pass through from the inner room, followed by all her ladies, to the chapel ; at the upper end stood the senators and officers of the state, then the rest of the spectators, and the lower end of the room was occupied by Cossack officers—wild, savage-looking fellows, whose long black hair, bare necks, long flowing garments, and crooked scimitars formed a striking contrast with the bags and powdered wigs of the rest of the party. The chapel was crowded, and the singing the most beautiful I ever heard ; no musical instruments are allowed by the Greek Church, and never was more delightful harmony produced by vocal performers. The effect was very grand when the singing suddenly

ceased, and the vast folding-doors of the sanctuary were thrown open, and the gilded altar and the priests (who are all selected for their beards and stature) were discovered amid a cloud of incense. During the service the empress stood on a step in the middle of the aisle, as no seats are allowed by the Greeks in their churches. But little attention was paid to the service by the greater part of the audience, though some continued bowing and crossing themselves the whole time. After the bishop had given the final blessing, I was surprised to see the beautiful young empress—for I really think her very much so—kiss his hand, which he returned on her hand and cheek; and his example was followed by the whole tribe of ecclesiastics—a race of as dirty monks as ever ate salt fish. The English clergy will, I fear, never be able to obtain a privilege like this.

The other ceremony I mentioned was the commencement of the month Ramadan, or Mahomedan Lent, and was chiefly remarkable for its novelty, and for the number of the followers of Mahomet among the lower classes of Petersburgh. It must also be observed that they were the most decent, attentive congrega-

tion that I have seen since I left England. The ceremony was performed in the great hall of the palace (now deserted and almost ruined) which Paul built, and where his life was terminated ; their mode of worship is very singular, as were the difficulties to which they were some of them put to comply with the laws of the prophet. I saw one sailor strip himself almost naked, that he might not be obliged to wear a green uniform when at prayer—green being forbidden to all but the lineal descendants of Mahomet. The same caution was visible in their place of worship ; it was decorated with sculpture and eagles,—all which they carefully concealed with sheets, lest their eyes should meet an idol.

I little thought I should hear the Alcoran read, or be dinned by exclamations of “Allah, Allah, Acbar ! ” This is indeed the only sight of Mahomedan manners which, in all probability, I shall ever have, as, unless very good news comes, we shall certainly not think of Constantinople. . . .

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REGINALD HEBER TO HIS MOTHER.

ST. PETERSBURGH, January 4, 1806.

. . . The whole plain from Valdai to Moscow is very level, entirely arable, generally com-

mon fields with some shabby enclosures, thickly set with villages and small coppices, in which the firs begin to be relieved by birch, lime, ash, and elm. . . .

Of the people we, of course, saw but little; though having so good an interpreter with us, we asked many questions and went into several of the cottages, which we found much cleaner than we expected, but so hot that we could not endure to remain in them long. A Russian cottage is always built of logs cemented with clay and moss, and is generally larger than an English one; it has two stories, one of which is half sunk and serves as a storehouse; two thirds of the upper story are taken up with the principal room, where they sit and sleep; and the remainder is divided between a closet where they cook their victuals, and an immense stove, not unlike an oven, which heats the whole building, and the top of which, for the chimney is only a small flue on the side, serves as a favorite sitting and sleeping place, though we could scarcely bear to lay our hands on it. In the corner of the great room always stands the bed of the master and mistress of the family—generally very neat and with curtains, sometimes of English cotton; the other branches of the family sleep on the stove

or floor. In the post-houses, which differ in no respect from this description, we always found good coffee, tea, and cream ; nothing else can be expected, and we carried our other provisions with us.

The country people are all alike,—dirty, good-humored fellows, in sheep-skin gowns, with the wool inwards. The drivers crossed themselves devoutly before beginning each stage, and sung the whole way or else talked to their horses. A Russian seldom beats his horse, but argues with him at first, and at last goes no further than to abuse him, and call him wolf or Jew, which last is the lowest pitch of their contemptuous expressions. . . .

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REGINALD HEBER TO HIS MOTHER.

Moscow, March 3, 1806.

. . . The Eastern retinues and luxuries which one meets with here are almost beyond belief. There are few English countesses have so many pearls in their possession as I have seen in the streets in the cap of a merchant's wife. At a ball in the ancient costume which was given by M. Nelidensky (Secretary of State to the late empress, whose family we have found the most agreeable in Moscow), the ladies all wore caps

entirely of pearls, and the blaze of diamonds on their *saraphans* (the ancient Russian tunic) would have outshone, I think, St. James's. The pearl bonnet is not a becoming dress, as it makes its wearer look very pale, a fault which some ladies had been evidently endeavoring to obviate. In general, however, this is not a very prevailing practice in Moscow, in which respect, as well as in every other, its ladies have an infinite advantage over those of Pittsburgh. . . .

The dissipation of Russia I had heard much of, but in this, as in every thing else, I have found the national character more amiable and innocent than it had been represented to me. Cards are very much the habit of the place, and they game very high, but have too good manners to ask you to play twice; and I have never touched a card except to draw a caricature upon it. The younger people, in fact, here, as elsewhere, are never expected to play, excepting in the lower circles, where we have no connection. On the whole, if it were not for the prospects before me, I should look upon what I am leaving with regret, as I always shall with esteem, as the seat of much hospitality, good humor, and good manners. . . .

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REGINALD HEBER TO RICHARD HEBER.

PHANAGORIA, IN THE ISLAND OF TAMAN,

April 20, 1806.

I had hoped to pass my birthday in the Crimea; but we have met with so many delays that it is daily growing less probable, and, as you will see by the date, almost decided that I cannot. For though the Bosphorus is now before me, and the opposite shore is only a few miles distant, the wind is unfortunately contrary, and what is still more unfortunate, there is no boat now in the harbor sufficiently large to contain our two carriages with convenience. . . . Our stay in Tcherkask was much more interesting than we had hoped, from the return of the attaman, a fine dignified old warrior, and from the celebration of the Easter festival, when all the great ceremonies and all the finery and merriment of the Cossacks were at their height. The elegance of the European ball-room produces, indeed, a very trifling effect in comparison with the gaudy and barbarous splendor of these remote provinces. The men were all in full uniform with a profusion of silver ornaments. The dress of a Cossack girl consists of yellow morocco boots, silk trousers

of the same color, or sometimes of pink and silver, a silk night-gown, generally pink or green, girt very gracefully with a silver cestus, which those in richer circumstances ornament with pearls. The head is simply bound with an Indian handkerchief, and the hair is plaited and hangs down the back. The midnight scene in the Cathedral church on Easter eve, where some thousands of these gaudy figures were assembled, each holding a taper, the dim light of which served to harmonize what would else have been too glaring; the soft plaintive chant of the choir, and their sudden change at the moment of daybreak, to the full chorus of "Christ is risen," were altogether what a poet or a painter would have studied with delight. . . .

The Easter week is given up to amusement; but though we had heard much of the profligacy of the Cossacks, there was certainly far less drunkenness and rioting than on an English holiday; and though I walked through the town pretty late at night, I saw not a single battle. . . .

Our whole journey on the banks of the Cuban has been a comment on Walter Scott.

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We had escorts from post to post of Cossacks armed with lances and carbines, and travelled with our swords ready, our pistols primed, and enjoying all the novelty and dignity of danger. The peasants whom we passed had every man his lance or musket slung over his shoulder; and almost every hill had a beacon and a warden raised on four high poles, twisted at the top with wicker, so as to resemble a crow's nest. We were almost wicked enough to wish for a skirmish; but though at one time an alarm was given that seventy mounted Circassians were hovering at the river-side, we made our journey in great peace. The Zaporogians are the fittest people in the world to have such neighbors, being themselves as wild irregular cavalry and as "restless riders" as can well be conceived. They often regretted to us that the humanity of the emperor forbade all attacks on the Circassians, unless in the way of retaliation. Whenever they plunder a village, drive the cattle, or carry away Russian subjects as slaves, which the cordon is not always able to prevent, the Cossacks are assembled, attack the Tcherkassi in their turn, and carry off as many cattle, men, and women as they can find, who